FEBRUARY 1962

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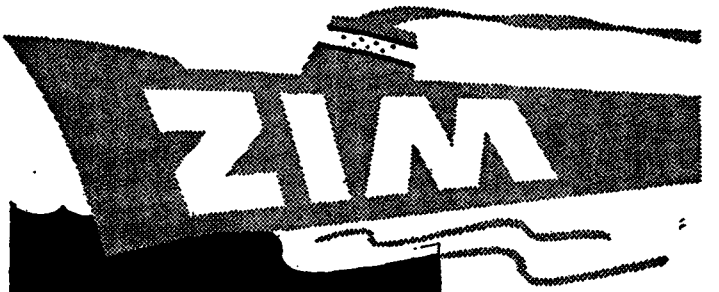

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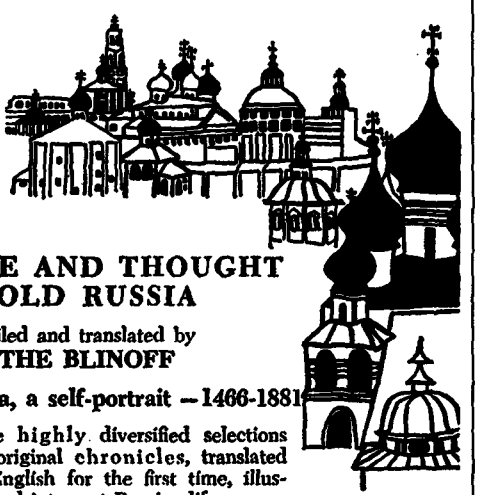

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COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee • Single copy 60¢; $7 a year; 2 years $12; 3 years $17 • No extra Canadian or foreign postage charge • Editorial & Business offices: 165 East 56th Street, New York 22 • Printed at 10 McGovern Avenue, Lancaster, Pa. by Business Press, Inc. • Second class postage paid at Lancaster •

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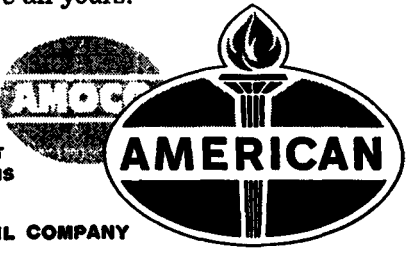

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THE AMERICAN LEFT AND CUBA

DENNIS H. WRONG

NOW THAT CUBA has become a member of the Soviet bloc and Fidel Castro has proclaimed that he has for some time been a dedicated "Marxist-Leninist," the response of the American left to the Cuban Revolution may be examined without recapitulating the previously contested evidence for these developments. Supporters of the Castro regime, while they will certainly continue to blame the United States for the victory of Cuban Communism, can no longer pretend that they are defending anything but a one-party dictatorship which has chosen a totalitarian course in internal politics and has completely forsworn neutralism in the cold war. No doubt many of Castro's American supporters will not draw back from such a defense, but others have had to undergo the only too familiar experience in this century of seeing their half-suppressed doubts about the trend of a new regime transformed into bleak certainties.

The Cuban tragedy of errors has been played out to the full. Events have entirely justified both the original fears of American policymakers about Cuba and of the Cuban revolutionaries about the United States. And the half-wishful nature of the fears on each side has helped make them self-confirming in their action and reaction upon one another. The disastrous American-sponsored invasion of last spring —morally and politically, not merely technically, disastrous—vindicated Castro in his demagogic anti-Americanism, although the violence and paranoia of his attacks on the United States helped bring about the very response he professed to fear. If the shock of the invasion forced liberal critics of Castro to confront the utter bankruptcy and irresponsibility of American policy, those whose willingness to give Castro the benefit of the doubt was strengthened by the invasion, can no longer evade full recognition of his primary allegiance in policy and ideology to the Sino-Soviet bloc. The air has cleared in the harsh daylight of the latest Cuban events, and a post-mortem on the attitudes of the American left toward the Cuban Revolution is now very much in order—and all the more so since the Cuban Revolution has provided the first significant test of the values and political intelligence of that amorphous entity, the "New Left."

In Britain, where the label originated, and to some extent on the European continent, the "New Left" refers to a fairly definite grouping of radicals under forty who possess some organizational unity, journals of their own, and ties to the left wing of established socialist parties. In America it is far harder to identify a coherent movement of youthful political protest. Negro

DENNIS H. WRONG, who now teaches sociology at the New School for Social Research in New York, is the author of *Population*, and has been a regular contributor to COMMENTARY for over ten years. He reviewed George Lichtheim's volume on *Marxism* in our December 1961 issue; his article, "Rockefeller as Liberal Hero," appeared in our issue of September 1960.

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sit-in strikers in the South, Northern groups sponsoring active resistance to segregation, young adherents of the peace movement, the essentially apolitical Beats, and revived socialist clubs and journals in the big cities and on some university campuses, present a varied picture. Except for their attraction to the young, no single target or common denominator unites these expressions of protest. All of them, moreover, have depended heavily on the ideological and organizational leadership of older men with long records of participation in the crusades and battles of the past three decades. Compared to its European counterparts, the American New Left is less fully an autonomous movement of the young generation—even the literary Beats are indebted to middle-aged promotors and gurus. Thus any survey of reactions to the Cuban Revolution must also consider various sectors of "Old Left" opinion as well as the position of the left, old and new, in relation to the major historical developments of the past decade and a half.

EUROPE, WHICH IN THE early years of the cold war was the main theater of political conflict, has successfully resisted further Communist expansion and has experienced unprecedented economic progress under moderate conservative governments. The once popular left view that only a socialist "third force," encouraged by the United States, could prevent the Continent from falling to the Communists has been utterly refuted by events. In America, where there has never been an established left in the European sense, liberal and radical demands have been confined to marginal issues by the requirements of cold war diplomacy and the defense economy. Throughout the Western world a parochial lack of concern with foreign policy and a concentration on secondary domestic issues has been the response of much of the left to this frustrating situation which deprives it of an independent political role.

Since the middle 1950's, however, there has been a growing tendency on the left to define the cold war as primarily a struggle over the political and economic destiny of the underdeveloped nations. As old-fashioned anti-colonialism has become less relevant, with more and more Asian and African peoples winning national independence, a preoccupation with the economic development of the new nations has begun to replace it. In the political stasis of the cold war and prosperity at home, the politics of economic development are becoming a substitute for the politics of domestic class struggle as a special concern of the left; Asia, Africa, and now Latin America, rather than Europe or the United States, have become the parts of the world for which the left can still claim to possess relevant prescriptions. Essentially, this reorientation of interest represents a sensible and long overdue recognition that we truly live in one world and an awareness that conservatives are unable or disinclined to sympathize with revolutionary change in its underdeveloped half.

But an insistence on the primary importance of the political and economic problems of the underdeveloped world has the additional attraction to some leftists of permitting an ideological end-run around the military frontier of the cold war and the dilemmas of nuclear policy it poses. If it leads to an emphasis on the open, non-military aspect of the East-West conflict, it also permits by-passing the cold war altogether and is easily combined with advocacy of total disengagement in Europe, demands for unilateral disarmament by the West, and an excessive readiness to believe that Khrushchev's Russia is more pacific and reasonable than Stalin's. The obvious irrelevance to the underdeveloped world of the anti-Communist monomania and military-mindedness of the conventional American definition of the cold war enables the left to adopt a perspective which is oppositionist at home yet ideologically programmatic on a "world-historical" scale, and which transcends the weary issues of capitalism and socialism

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or New Dealism, Communism and anti-Communism, as they have been conceived in the context of Western politics. Yet old problems of freedom, revolution, the price of economic progress, and the relevance of democracy reappear, though now at arm's length from the internal life of the Western political community.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE Cuban Revolution to the American left must be understood against this background rather than as the result of any long-standing interest in Cuba itself or even Latin America. Suddenly the task of overcoming poverty in backward countries was dramatized by a full-fledged social revolution in America's own underdeveloped sphere of influence, long dismissed as a politically hopeless area dominated by corrupt military dictators, where—the symbols of formal independence having been won long ago—even the dynamism of a rising nationalism was lacking. Castro's triumph coincided with the closing years of the Eisenhower administration, whose sterile anti-Communism and hostility or indifference to revolutionary movements abroad had been reflected in its tolerance of the deposed Batista. Cuba represents several "firsts": the first successful popular social revolution with a worldwide impact in many years; the first political event in Latin America for decades to have had great repercussions in the United States; the first underdeveloped country to produce a leader capable of moving Western intellectuals to entranced identification with him; the first country geographically remote from the Communist bloc nations to pattern itself internally on them and to give them its full allegiance; the first country to become a victim of an American act of aggression since the beginning of the cold war. (Guatemala was ambiguous at the time, although it has aroused considerable retrospective indignation, particularly in light of Cuba.)

Castro had the almost universal support of American liberals and radicals —as well as of more conservative segments of opinion—for about a year after he came to power at the end of 1958. By the summer of 1959 it was evident that the Cuban Revolution amounted to more than the dramatic overthrow of an unpopular dictator and that its leaders possessed the drive and support to carry out a radical program of land reform and industrial nationalization. Expropriated American business interests began to make common cause with anti-Communist and nationalist American politicians and publicists on the right and with largely pro-Batista Cuban exile groups in attacking the Castro regime. Rising criticsim in the United States, most of it emanating from such ignorant and profoundly ill-willed sources, had the effect of increasing American left-wing support of the Cuban Revolution. The Fair Play for Cuba Committee was founded by a number of prominent liberals and radicals in the spring of 1960 and established chapters on some university campuses, attracting the support of left-wing students. In the spring and summer of 1960 visits to Cuba "to see for oneself" by radical intellectuals who had shown little previous interest in Latin American politics became common. Before this period, the main accounts of the Cuban Revolution going beyond day-by-day reporting had come from a few journalists (Herbert Matthews of the New York *Times* was, of course, the most influential) and several academic specialists in Latin American affairs. Nearly all of them were strongly sympathetic to Castro and the Revolution, although a few expressed reservations, less about the influence of the Communists than about the totalitarian implications of Castro's persistent fanning of a ferocious populist mood with diatribes against counter-revolutionaries, ex-*Batistianos*, and increasingly, "Yankee imperialism."

By the late summer and autumn of 1960, the first lengthy interpretations of the Revolution by radical intellectuals, following their visits to Cuba earlier in the year, appeared. These included two books,

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Leo Huberman and Paul M. Sweezy's *Cuba, Anatomy of a Revolution* and C. Wright Mills's *Listen, Yankee,* as well as Jean-Paul Sartre's series of articles, later published in the United States in a volume called *Sartre on Cuba.* These writers took note of assertions that the Castro regime was moving in a Communist direction—but only as voiced in vulgar and inaccurate form by the popular American press. They paid little attention to charges of growing internal Communist influence, except to deny them, and defended Cuba's economic ties with the Soviet Union (for which, of course, a good case could be made) as no more than a sound business proposition necessitated by the American suspension of the Cuban sugar quota. Yet months before these writers had visited Cuba, as early as the autumn of 1959, the growing power of the Cuban Communists had become a major issue within the Castro regime itself, and a number of Castro's closest revolutionary comrades—by no means "respectable" moderates opposed to basic economic reforms, as Castro's apologists allege—had defected or been forced out of office for opposing Communist gains at the expense of the original *Fidelistas.* Undeniably, most of the intellectuals who visited Cuba in early 1960 were in no position to observe or even to learn of these developments (for one thing few of them spoke Spanish), but they were scarcely disposed in any case to view the Revolution with even a modicum of critical reserve.

Events were moving so quickly in Cuba that by the time the more lengthy analyses of the Revolution had appeared in book form in the United States the situation had greatly changed. As a socialist writer, Michael Harrington, observed last August, "*Listen, Yankee* is a faithful rendering of the point of view of a 26th of July militant of a year or so ago. . . . One reads, for instance, how his [Mills's] militant feels about the Communist party, and then turns to the most recent statement of the Maximum Leader. An enormous change has taken place, and Mills had no inkling of it." What is true of Mills's book is even truer of Sartre's existentialist celebration of the Revolution as a movement guided by no fixed ideology but defining itself in practice.

Magazines and newspapers, however, can avoid being outdated by events more easily than books. By the end of 1960 and through the following year, division *within* the ranks of the left over Castro's Cuba became clearly evident and can be followed, especially in their correspondence columns, in *Dissent,* the *Catholic Worker, Liberation, Monthly Review,* the *Nation,* the *New Leader, New Politics,* the *New Republic, Studies on the Left,* and the *Village Voice.* These journals more or less cover the spectrum of left opinion in the United States, excluding official Communist publications and those of the tiny Marxist sects. None of them published articles or editorials defending the American-supported invasion of last April, even in its conception as distinct from its execution, and none of them have taken seriously the ultra-right view that the entire Cuban Revolution was simply a Communist plot from the beginning.

Articles on Cuba in the *New Leader* and *Dissent* have been almost uniformly critical of the Castro regime, expressing reservations even in the early period when left-liberal opinion was unanimously sympathetic. *Monthly Review* and *Studies on the Left,* on the other hand, have been even more consistently pro-Castro and have increasingly engaged in polemics against the views of the anti-Castro left. The other journals, in varying degrees, have published both pro- and anti-Castro articles; their letters columns, and in the case of *Liberation* their editorial columns, have been filled with vigorous controversy. This rough line-up of pro and anti views on the trend of the Revolution has, as we shall see, some significance, but it should be emphasized that it in no way corresponds to a broader continuum of

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views from moderate to "extreme" left—if indeed such a classification makes sense at all any longer, which is doubtful. However, the various groupings and ideological positions of both the Old and the New Left are reflected in reactions to the Cuban situation.

THE NEW LEADER AND DISSENT both represent the old anti-Stalinist left, the former from what was once a right-wing socialist (or "Menshevik") position, the latter from a more radical, often "sophisticated" Marxist or neo-Marxist, perspective. The *New Leader* last year published two long supplements on Cuba by Theodore Draper, which have made Draper the "Trotsky" of the Cuban Revolution to Castro's supporters—a critic who is too well-informed and formidable to be easily dismissed. Draper is an ex-Communist, the author of two excellent scholarly studies of American Communism, whose first visit to Cuba in the spring of 1960 was followed by an article praising the reforms improving living standards initiated by the Castro regime in the first year of the Revolution. Other survivors of the old anti-Stalinist left, whether they were formerly Communists, Trotskyites, or Social Democrats, and whether they are today moderate liberals or some species of democratic socialist, have also—usually more in sorrow than in anger—turned against the Castro regime while continuing to condemn the invasion attempt and America's past record of tolerating rightist dictators and economic colonialism in Cuba and Latin America as a whole. Among those who have expressed themselves forcefully are Robert Alexander and Daniel Friedenberg (both authorities on Latin America long before the Cuban Revolution), and Michael Harrington, Michael Walzer, and Sam Bottone. Inevitably, memories of a previous "revolution betrayed" made veteran anti-Stalinists sensitive to totalitarian tendencies in Cuba from the beginning; their doubts and suspicions were intensified when Castro denounced former comrades as traitors, when *Fidelista* exiles began to flock to Miami, when the Cuban leaders disparaged democratic institutions and destroyed civil freedoms in the name of the "higher democracy" of the Revolution—and when some American leftists began to indulge in a painfully familiar brand of apologetics for the regime.

Monthly Review, on the other hand, represents that segment of American leftist opinion which, without associating itself in any way with the Communist party either ideologically or organizationally, has continued to maintain that Russia and China are "socialist" countries, more "progressive" and therefore more deserving of the sympathy of the left than the "capitalist" West. *Monthly Review* has often been critical of the Soviet Union since Hungary and de-Stalinization, but its editors and contributors have never abandoned their conviction that Soviet society is bound to become more liberal now that it is fully industrialized and that its economic achievements provide the best model for the underdeveloped countries to follow. Joan Robinson, the well-known British Keynesian economist, recently exulted in *Monthly Review* that Western capitalism, although undeniably more stable than formerly, could pride itself on being the second-best economic system in the world, the growth rates of Russia and China allegedly having proven the superiority of "socialism." Miss Robinson, Paul Baran, and Paul Sweezy (one of the editors), as well as several other regular contributors to *Monthly Review,* are all professional economists. Their fetishism of economic development, no matter what its political and social costs, curiously parallels the free market fetishism of their opposite numbers, the "hard" neo-classical economists who advocate abandoning all government welfare programs, including public education, and outlawing trade unions in order to maximize "consumer sovereignty" and "efficient allocation of economic resources," which can only be insured by a pure free market system.

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CUBA HAS PROVIDED a heaven-sent ideological opportunity for the fetishists of state-directed economic growth. Since they are forced to concede that Western capitalism has partially resolved its "internal contradictions" and moderated class conflicts, the underdeveloped world now becomes the place where the "fetters of capitalism" prevent economic progress. And when, as in Cuba, a revolution occurs in a backward country directed against a corrupt native ruling class allied with American business interests, "capitalism," and better still American capitalism, can with some plausibility be blamed for underdevelopment, rather than the greed of domestic oligarchs, overpopulation, or the strength of pre-industrial traditions and institutions. Thus worldwide significance can be attributed to Cuba. Huberman and Sweezy and Baran have been quick to interpret the Revolution in accordance with their view that "socialism," defined as centralized state planning and nothing more, is the sole road to economic development for backward countries. Dictatorships and the destruction of civil liberties are seen as temporary necessities justified by the long-run goal of economic development and the ruthlessness of the capitalist-imperialist enemy. These writers, not surprisingly, are undisturbed by the Communist take-over in Cuba and are far more ready to concede that there has been such a take-over than other American supporters of Castro. "A stranger arriving in Havana," Professor J. P. Morray wrote last summer in *Monthly Review,* "would now have some difficulty distinguishing the official Communist party newspaper from the others." His explanation, echoing that of Castro and Che Guevara themselves, is that, although there were few replacements of non-Communists by Communists in the top levels of the government, "the necessities of the Revolution and the growing contacts with the socialist [read Soviet bloc] countries produced what appears to have been a mass conversion to Marxist-Leninist ideology." He concludes—probably accurately—that "the steady course of the Revolution toward Leninist socialism is due to the hand of Fidel Castro, not of the Communist party, at the helm of the Cuban state."

In effect, the *Monthly Review* group has adapted past apologias for Soviet totalitarianism to the Cuban situation in the language of a new theory of the requirements of economic development. Isolated by the cold war, disoriented by Hungary and de-Stalinization, they have been enabled by the Cuban Revolution to regain some intellectual influence over the various politically inexperienced New Left groups emerging in the past few years. Yet their outlook is scholastic and heavily ideological; the New Left enthusiasts for Castro were, at least in the beginning, more naive, more directly concerned with Cuba as such, and more responsive to the immediate *élan* of the Revolution itself. Sartre and Mills, with their stress on the freedom of the *Fidelistas* from the rigid ideological formulas of the past, were undoubtedly more in tune with the mood of those who were bored with old battles, who saw both the United States and Russia as bureaucratic managerial societies, and who wished as they listened with vicarious nostalgia to their elders' talk of Spain and anti-fascism for a fresh new cause that their "generation" might embrace. They were anxious to agree with Daniel Friedenberg, one of the earliest of Castro's critics from the left, that "Castro's was a good fight, perhaps the only clean and unequivocal fight since the Spanish Civil War," but they were incapable of adding his immediate qualification: "At least I thought so in 1958 and still do with that part of my heart my mind tells me is unreliable."

This mood was most pronounced in England and received fullest expression in the pages of *New Left Review.* In America, *Studies on the Left,* edited by a number of graduate students at the University of Wisconsin, appeared in 1959 and presented itself as an American coun-

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terpart of the British New Left—although the association with the journal of several older men of proto-Stalinist antecedents made its claim to be reviving a Marxist approach free of past commitments somewhat less convincing than in the case of the older English group. An early issue reprinted Sartre and Che Guevara on the Cuban Revolution and hailed it in an editorial which, however, devoted more space to attacking American policy, concluding that "Cuba presents us with an urgent task and, at the same time, with the best opportunity to expose and destroy cold war ideology." Cuba was described as a "new humane society" and the conflict between "freedom" and "Communism" as a "sham battle."

Studies on the Left represents a more self-consciously ideological tendency than the other youthful New Left groups in the United States which have been more attracted by direct moral protest than by political analysis, and have valued action and the evidence of vitality over intellectual rigor. But the early issues of *Studies on the Left* also manifested this spirit in their eagerness to see the Cuban Revolution as a new beginning, a new form of "existential" radicalism distinct both from Communism and from liberal democratic reformism. Unhappily much of this spirit has now vanished and recent issues resemble *Monthly Review* in their doctrinaire defense of Castro and polemical onslaughts against his leftist critics. The current number, for example, contains a ponderous effort by a recent Ph.D. in social psychology employing the jargon of psychoanalysis to discredit "American Anti-Communist Liberals" (the term is the author's), especially their views on Cuba. Their outlook is characterized as a "defensive reaction to political anxiety"; Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, the editors of *Dissent,* reveal the mechanism of "projection" when they doubt that Khrushchev's Russia has ceased to be totalitarian; Theodore Draper is fixated on the "primitive political assumption" that "to reject capitalism is bad" and thus condemns Castro (nothing is said of his early support of Castro's socialistic reforms); and so on. One wearily recalls talk over a decade ago about the anti-Communist left's "Stalinophobia" and the "reaction formations" of allegedly "guilt-ridden" ex-Communists: the abuse of psychoanalysis as a political weapon is an old story.

FIDEL CASTRO was a natural hero for the New Left from the first. The survival of his tiny group of fighters in the mountains, their brilliant feats of guerilla warfare, and their amazingly sudden victory when Batista's army simply gave up, made Castro a genuine hero in an age of characterless bureaucratic leaders. Moreover, he and all his men were young and wore unruly beards, the newly publicized symbol of rebellious youth. His air of informality and creative improvisation, so evident on his brief American trip in early 1959, when he casually lit cigars, talked endlessly, and strolled on and off speech platforms in the middle of official receptions for him, stood in delightful contrast to the managed appearances of other politicians in this age of TV. And then it became apparent that he was the leader of a real live social revolution, no mere *putsch,* and was determined to carry out without delay genuinely egalitarian reforms. Thoughtless, pious, and reactionary voices were too quickly raised against him in the United States, as in the criticisms of the mass trials of Batista's thugs. Sartre and Mills came back from Cuba reporting that here was something new under the sun and pilgrimages from the mainland began in earnest.

Young radicals seeking a cause, like the editors of *Studies on the Left,* went. Bohemian poets and painters, previously unpolitical though full of contempt for American middle-class life, went. And others, such as Warren Miller and Marc Schleiffer, both young novelists, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, one of the *doyens* of the San Francisco Beat poets, and Leroi Jones,

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another new Bohemian poet and editor, wrote enthusiastic accounts of what they had witnessed in Cuba. They were caught up in a festive atmosphere, a mass euphoria generated by the Revolution, which was alien to their previous experience, and their reports, often written with skill and feeling, are reminiscent of John Reed on Petrograd during the October Revolution of 1917 or George Orwell on revolutionary Barcelona in 1937. Most of the literary rebels who thus celebrated the Cuban Revolution have been silent for the past year or more, but the quality of their response to Castro was perhaps best expressed in an open letter to the Maximum Leader by Norman Mailer, published in the *Village Voice* just after the collapse of the invasion, but written, Mailer says, several months earlier. "You were the first and greatest hero to appear in the world since the Second War," he wrote. "There has been a new spirit abroad in America since you entered Havana. I think you must be given credit for some part of a new and better mood which has been coming to America." He goes on to warn Castro about his new friendship with Khrushchev, because "Commissars never made a revolution . . . [and] the Communists are used to considering small nations expendable—it is part of their pride that they will sacrifice their followers." In an open letter to Kennedy denouncing the invasion, published at the same time, Mailer tells the President, "you will never understand that the man [Castro] is the country, revolutionary, tyrannical, hysterical, violent, passionate, brave as the best of animals, doomed perhaps to end in tragedy, but one of the great figures of the 20th century, at the present moment a far greater figure than yourself."

ANOTHER GROUP of Castro supporters on the left are, rather surprisingly, the "ethical" radicals: pacifists, libertarian anarchists, Catholic socialists, and advocates of non-violent resistance. The growing peace movement and the non-violent campaign against racial segregation have in recent years given them a wider audience, which may account for their readiness to take up the cause of the Cuban Revolution. Although most of their arguments and interpretations are similar to those from other pro-Castro sources, the tone of writers on Cuba for *Liberation* and the *Catholic Worker* is quite different from both the bland, doctrinaire apologetics of the *Monthly Review* group and the revolutionary romanticism of the literary *Fidelistas*. It is far more troubled, groping, and ready to confront, even if in the end to minimize, the evidence of totalitarianism and Communism in Cuba. David Dellinger, an editor of *Liberation,* has written the second-best factual and moderately sympathetic appraisal of the Castro regime's achievements in the early period of the Revolution. (The author of the best account is Samuel Shapiro, an academic Latin Americanist writing in the *New Republic,* who has since become somewhat disillusioned with the Revolution, though continuing to place major blame for the Communist take-over on the United States.)

Through 1960 *Liberation* published a large number of articles on Cuba expressing a variety of points of view. The majority were strongly sympathetic, but several were quite critical of internal developments—for instance, pieces by Robert Alexander and Kenneth Boulding, the well-known economist. In early 1961, Roy Finch, one of the editors, impressed by the suppression in Cuba of libertarian anarchists and other independent radicals, concluded that "the Revolution has pretty well been taken over by totalitarian-minded people" and "the minuses begin to outweigh the pluses." The other editors were quick to express their disagreement with him and, after publishing a full statement of his point of view, Finch resigned from the editorial board in May on the grounds that the other editors' "continuing and relatively enthusiastic support for the Castro government (though with vary-

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ing degree of reservations) seems to be at variance with our original policy." Correspondence supporting both Finch and the remaining editors, much of it lengthy, appeared in the magazine.

The April invasion seemed to strengthen the pro-Castro position of *Liberation's* editors. They published, among other things on Cuba, an excellent critical analysis of the shocking American press coverage of the event. Since then the editors have continued to regard Cuba as the exemplar of a "new humanistic radicalism," but their doubts and misgivings have perceptibly increased. In the December 1961 issue, Sidney Lens, an editor, reports on his latest trip to the island and deplores "bureaucratic tendencies," the arrogance of the secret police, the growing adulation of Castro, and the total absence of any criticism in the controlled press. Yet he is still able to maintain that "at the moment none of this has destroyed the humanism of the Revolution." He suggests hopefully —and credulously—that "plans for a new, unified single party may result in the Communists being engulfed and subordinated . . . and perhaps the Communists will no longer be able to function as a tight-knit disciplined group in the broader movement." And he reports without comment the surely preposterous statement of "a prominent Cuban writer" that Kennedy could destroy the Communists "in ten minutes" by reopening his embassy because "Fidel would agree to it immediately and undercut them."

If the Old Left has inevitably interpreted the Cuban Revolution in accordance with an outlook shaped by the historical and ideological struggles of the past three decades, the Revolution has been a new and formative experience for the New Left. It is among the younger Castro partisans that one finds the will to believe in its purest form, brusque impatience with the past, and a readiness to attribute sweeping historical significance to Cuba. Unhappily, the ancient symptoms of wishful selection and reading of the evidence, and indulgence in wild and bitter attacks on doubters, especially those who are also of the left, have been quick to reveal themselves. Let us, in order to bear out these statements, look, in closing, at some of the arguments and counterarguments advanced in Castro's favor.

Cuba is, after all, a small country, necessarily confined to a minor role in world politics and scarcely likely to be the scene of a social transformation that is vitally relevant to the experience of older and larger nations. But some of Castro's supporters are not content to interpret the Cuban Revolution as an incident in the larger setting of the cold war or even as a feasible model for the economic development of other relatively poor and backward countries. They must see it as something more earth-shaking than that, as an entirely new and unprecedented experience from which, not merely the other Latin American peoples or even the underdeveloped world as a whole, but we Westerners ourselves can learn lessons applicable to our own societies. Thus Stuart Hall and Norman Fruchter, editors of the English *New Left Review,* argue that, far from possessing exclusive relevance to "the revolutions in all the backward territories," the Cuban Revolution "resumes fully the whole galaxy of questions involved in socialism in our time . . . [and] could be either the axis or the graveyard of socialism in the next decade."

Since, in the eyes of the New Left, the world Communist leaders are as rigid, bureaucratic, and lacking in humanity as the leaders of the West, much has been made of the alleged difference between Castro's economic reforms and the priorities of Communist planning. Hall and Fruchter, Saul Landau (an editor of *Studies on the Left*), and others have pointed out that Castro's initial reforms in land distribution, housing, rent control, education, and public recreation have been directed toward the immediate improvement and equalization of living

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standards, whereas the orthodox Communist practice is to stress heavy industry and capital accumulation at the expense of consumer goods, thus sacrificing the needs of the living to an economic development which will benefit only future generations. The claim that Castro stands for a "new humanist socialism" is largely based on this contrast with the Communist pattern of enforced industrialization.

But, as Castro's partisans are only too ready to remind us in connection with other matters, a revolution is a process, and its final achievements outrun and transcend both the aims of its makers and the tendencies present at the beginning. More than two decades of violent struggle within the Bolshevik leadership, the failures of Communist movements in the mature industrial societies of the West, and the expansion of Soviet power as a result of war into the less advanced areas of Eastern Europe and Asia, intervened between the Russian Revolution and the eventual emergence of Communism as a technique for rapidly and ruthlessly industrializing backward societies. Have the new leftists forgotten Lenin's New Economic Policy of the early 20's with its slogan of "enrich yourselves" addressed to the peasants? May not Castro's "humanist" reforms look equally remote a decade from now if the Cuban Revolution follows its present course? Even where doctrinaire Communist movements triumphed, in Eastern Europe and China, the redistribution of land and other popular reforms raising living standards were initiated in the early years of their consolidation in power. It was not long, however, before the peasants were forced into state-controlled collective farms, armaments production took precedence over consumer goods, and heavy sacrifices were demanded for the sake of increasing the tempo of industrialization. Already the same process is repeating itself in Cuba. The Maximum Leader boasts that Cuba is becoming an armed camp, although the United States could destroy him in a few days if it so wished. And, according to Theodore Draper, the agricultural cooperatives so praised by Castro's American admirers are increasingly being overtaken by *granjas* or People's Farms, "closely modeled on the Soviets' *sovkhos* or state farm system." Since we are urged to take a long view when the question of democracy and freedom in Cuba is at issue, let us do the same for Cuban economic policies and methods of industrialization.

JUSTIFICATIONS OF THE absence of democracy in Cuba are worth examining because the particular arguments employed are highly selective. Castro's New Left supporters are concerned not just with defending or excusing Castro, but with expressing a positive faith, a mystique of the Cuban Revolution, that goes far beyond mere apologetics. American opinion is accused of having an obsession about elections. The explanations offered for Castro's failure to hold elections are on the whole reasonable: the Revolution has been unquestionably popular with a large majority of the Cuban people, and few revolutionary governments, including the one headed by George Washington, have held elections until considerable time elapsed after they came to power. It is also true that the United States is disposed to raise the issue of elections only with reference to dictators who threaten American interests or pursue an independent foreign policy: little fuss was made about Batista, Rhee, Chiang, or Franco (who was recently praised lavishly by Secretary of State Rusk). As David Riesman has remarked, "the word 'freedom' becomes truly Orwellian when we use it to support the landing of Batista officers on Cuban beaches."

Castro's apologists, however, by concentrating on the question of elections, conveniently avoid the more fundamental issue of civil liberties: freedom from arbitrary arrest, the right to a fair and open trial, freedom of the press, the right to maintain free trade unions independent

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of government control. It is the suppression of these freedoms, not Castro's failure to hold elections or even to permit rival political parties to organize, which has alarmed such critics as Draper, Friedenberg, and the old anti-totalitarians of the left. Nor do Castro's supporters confine themselves to justifying the temporary postponement of elections: like Castro himself, they now argue that the Cuban people don't want elections because they were often rigged in the past and were followed by corruption and betrayed promises. Why, then, one wonders, couldn't Castro, in whom the people are said to have such profound faith and who has transformed Cuban society, overcoming tremendous obstacles, hold an honest election, at least when the time seems ripe? But Castro's admirers do not hesitate to take the further step of sneering at elections as such: they frequently write scathingly not merely of past electoral shams in Cuba but of the lack of a "real choice" in the United States when the voter is asked to opt for a Nixon or a Kennedy. And it now becomes plain that the old Marxist theory of the hoax of "bourgeois democracy" is being revived in a new guise. Its function is the same as before: to extol "economic democracy" at the expense of "formal" political democracy, to minimize the destruction of civil rights and liberties by treating voting and parties as the sole content of Western political institutions, and, finally, to celebrate the superior "direct" democracy of the single leader, or cadre of leaders, who needs no institutional apparatus to mediate his interpretations of the will of the people.

In an intemperate letter to the *Village Voice* denouncing "many self-styled American liberals" as men of little faith, Richard Gibson, acting secretary of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, gives the game away: "For these young men of the Last Frontier," he writes, "Fidel Castro, Sekou Touré, Kwame N'Krumah, and Dr. Ahmed Sukarno are only dictators, not liberators acclaimed by millions of men and women who see in them the truest expression of their aspirations for a decent life free of the shackles of a cruel and corrupt West." Perhaps it would be useless to remind Mr. Gibson that millions also acclaimed Hitler, Mussolini, and, in Latin America, Peron and Trujillo. Popular dictators are scarcely a novelty in this century. (Why, incidentally, does he omit Gamel Nasser from his list?) But one wonders why the dictatorial leaders of new underdeveloped nations represent the "truest expression" of popular aspirations for a better life. Are, say, Jawaharlal Nehru, Habib Bourguiba, the late Ramon Magsaysay, José Figueres, and Romulo Betancourt to be regarded as less authentic leaders of the "revolution of rising expectations" just because they are not dictators with totalitarian inclinations who have eliminated all real alternatives to their own direction of their nations' destinies? And is it "pessimistic and defeatist" of American liberals and radicals to believe that such men are more deserving of their support and more likely to achieve both economic progress and political liberty than authoritarian demagogues?

Many people have seen a parallel between the totalitarian outcome of the Russian Revolution and the far faster movement in the same direction of the Castro regime. Some of Castro's New Left supporters in the United States seem in an equally short time to have traveled from a fresh rebellious idealism, sorely needed after the confusions and timidities of the 50's, to a fascination with populist totalitarianism that is scarcely distinguishable from that of the latter-day Communist apologists of the late 30's and early 40's. One is forced to be thankful that Castro leads only Cuba and not, as Stalin did, one of the great nations of the world.

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DANIEL FUCHS

WRITING FOR THE MOVIES

DEAR EDITORS:

Thank you for your kind letter and compliments. Yes, your hunch was right, I would like very much to tell about the problems and values I've encountered, writing for the movies all these years. I'm so slow in replying to you because I thought it would be a pleasant gesture—in return for your warm letter—to send you the completed essay. But it's taken me longer than I thought it would. I've always been impressed by the sure, brimming conviction of people who attack Hollywood, and this even though they may never have been inside the business and so haven't had the chance of knowing how really onerous and exacerbating the conditions are. But for me the subject is more disturbing, or else it is that I like to let my mind wander and that I start from a different bias, or maybe I've just been here too long.

When I came to California twenty-five years ago, I was taken with the immense, brilliantly clean sunshine which hovered over everything. I wrote troubled pieces about Hollywood—a diary which I actually kept, an article titled "Dream City or The Drugged Lake." The studio where I worked, RKO on Gower Street, seemed drenched and overpowered by the sun. The studio paths were empty; you heard a composer somewhere listlessly working up a tune for a musical picture: "Oh, I ADORE you, ADORE you, ADORE you—you WONDERFUL thing!" The people stayed hidden inside their offices, and what they did there, I didn't know. I was made welcome to the community with a grace I somehow hadn't expected—by the wonderful Epstein brothers, who broke the way for me and looked out for me; by Dorothy Parker, who telephoned and introduced me to a glittering group of people, or a group I thought glittering; by John Garfield, with his honest and wholehearted happy spirits; and by a man named Barney Glazer, now dead, at one time head of Paramount Studios. Mr. Glazer had a beautiful home on Chevy Chase Drive in Beverly Hills. It was surrounded by carefully tended grounds—gardens and strawberry patches, patios, a championship enclosed tennis court, a championship swimming pool, dressing rooms, a gymnasium. After the week's work, starting with Saturday afternoon, guests assembled there and a sort of continuous party went on until Monday morning. Mr. Glazer trotted through the assemblage, ignoring the entertainment and the championship tennis court, bent on his own pursuits. He was interested in fine china and *objets d'art,* in carpentry work, in watching over his dogs who were getting old and decrepit and

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kept falling into the swimming pool; the dogs, when they hurt themselves, would huddle motionless and just wait until Mr. Glazer came hurrying up, to scold and take care of them. With his open generosity, he took pains to make sure I felt easy among the company at those parties, and I visited his home often, appearing on most of the week-ends. Many kinds of people were there, but mainly the old-timers, men who were firmly a part of the movie business—grizzled and heavy-eyed, patient, pestered by arthritis, sciatica, and other vexations. They smiled at me. They were amused by my inexperience and newness to their community. They liked me and I think they wanted to be liked. But they would never parry my questions. They wouldn't respond to my inquiries and doubts. They knew that if I was to learn anything about their way of living and working, it would be no good unless I found it out by myself. "I would argue with you," one of them said to me, "but if I win the argument, what do I win?" They had their minds set on other things, and the time was short.

NOT LONG AFTER I came to Hollywood, I was asked by my studio—not RKO, another studio—to help work on a picture which was shot and done, which was in its rough cut, but which had gone awry along the road. The picture was a mystery-spy thriller, the kind of story the English write so expertly. Our English novelist was one of the best; his novel had been adapted by an able, conscientious screenwriter; the producer and director were also thoroughly seasoned and professional. The trouble lay in the star. If you examine these English spy-thrillers, you find that they're almost invariably concerned with an innocent: the hero is guileless and sweet; he is suddenly assaulted by a bewildering collection of circumstances; he gropes, is buffeted; he holds on, out of a perverse stubbornness; he digs in, perseveres; little by little the truths are revealed to him; he is chastened, matured, and the picture is over. That's how these stories go. But our star would have nothing to do with innocence. He adamantly refused to play the part as written. There was no use in blaming him. He had built up a personal identity over the years as a trench-coated, hard-boiled character who knew the world; he believed in this characterization and had prospered with it; and from his point of view it would have been senseless to jettison everything for the sake of a single picture. Nor could you fairly blame the studio management—there are just so many stars around and you take the best one you can get. So I could understand the star, I could understand the studio; I was inside the business now, and knew these were realities that had to be met. But this essential conflict between the star and his part produced a chaos—when the picture was put together—that was amazingly complex and convoluted. Every story value was bewitched. The film raced on its sprocket holes; people glided about, as in dreams; telling points were certainly being made, except that you didn't know what they told, you didn't know what you were supposed to think or feel. I was confounded. I didn't know even how to begin. To add to my predicament, by a quirk of fortune, I was thrown into this assignment by the studio, required to work in tandem with a collaborator who was no less than one of perhaps the ten most important literary figures in the world. I was paralyzed by awe. It happened that I had a deep, long-time admiration for this man and his achievement. I couldn't blurt out my esteem. It was almost impossible for me to hold conferences with him, to exchange notions and story ideas in the free, knock-about way which is our practice in the studios. I stuttered and fumbled. I couldn't meet his eyes in his presence, and kept looking down at the floor. I addressed him as Mr. Soinso, not as Al or Tom.

"I know why you don't cozy to me," he said softly to me one day, seeing that

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things were going badly. "You don't cozy to me because you think I'm anti-Semitic."

"Yes," I said. I was dismayed to hear myself saying, "How about that?"

"Well, it's troo-oo," he said, searching within himself and perplexed. "I don't like Jews—but I don't like Gentiles neither."

The director, a fastidious gentleman, as so many of them in our city are, was no help. He wore a smart, hand-embroidered cowboy suit, cowboy boots, a scarf at his throat, and had recently married a girl one-third his age—he was sixty and not easy to approach. At our first meeting, he lifted an eyelid, took a good look at my collaborator and me, saw there was nothing coming from us, and disappeared. I can't recall that he ever said a single word to either one of us. The producer was similarly out of reach. He was in hiding, incommunicado. Our star insisted on a scene in which he was given the Congressional Medal of Honor—Cagney had received one, in *Yankee Doodle Dandy,* the camera shooting from behind President Roosevelt's head, and our star threatened bodily harm unless the producer rewarded him in the same way at the conclusion of our picture. The producer, in consequence, stayed clear of his office and did his work in whatever sound stages happened to be idle around the lot. So my collaborator and I were left strictly to ourselves. I floundered. Scenes had to be written; some key had to be found which would toss the combinations magically aright; the re-takes were waiting to be shot. And the deadlines were coming nearer and nearer.

"Where do you sneak off to every night?" my collaborator said to me one evening, drawing up softly, out of nowhere.

I stared at him. I didn't know what he was talking about.

"Comes about nightfall," he said, sly and glinting, drawing up closer—*what did I have stashed away? What illicit bargainings was I up to, what devious chicaneries?* "Comes about nightfall, I look out my window, and there I see you on the path, scooting along—where do you go?"

"Where do I go?" I said. "I go no place—I go home."

"Home?" he said. "Home? *Every* night?"

I felt disheartened and lost, ignominious or ludicrous as the terms of the situation might be. I was bereft. I liked my collaborator, and was failing him. I had seen enough of the people at Mr. Glazer's home to be genuinely respectful. I was touched by their quality; I wondered at them and was attracted and wanted some day to be part of them. And yet they were failing me, or I was failing them. Out of my helplessness and distress, I became furtive. I started keeping out of sight. I slipped off the lot. They say the first delivery is the hardest, but in our case, with my wife and me, it was the second—we were having a new baby at the time. I received sudden emergency calls, and bolted. Toward the end I stayed close to the hospital and was gone from the studio for days at a stretch. And then abruptly, miraculously, everything was calm. The fever was over. Everything that needed to be done was done. The scenes had been photographed; the picture was re-assembled; the front office was pleased. Suddenly, late one Saturday afternoon, I found myself with my collaborator sitting in the producer's office, the producer there thanking us for our contributions to the job, still apologizing because he had unavoidably neglected us. All endings are sad, no matter what they are the endings to, and few places are as peaceful and benign as a movie lot when the work has halted and everyone has left. The producer was mellow, worn and humble in spirit, as we are after crisis.

"I'll think of you," he said to my collaborator—my collaborator was leaving us, on his way back to his home in the heart of the nation.

"I'll think of you too," my collaborator

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said, eying us both somberly, thinking no doubt of the turmoil, the business with the sound stages, my peculiar behavior, and the mysterious phone calls. "I'll think of you too," he said, implacable and without mercy to the last, "in the middle of the night."

THE WONDER WAS the picture. It was whole now, sound—the myriad nerve-lines of continuity in working order, the conglomeration of effects artfully re-juggled, brisk and full of urgent meaning. With the unsettling irrelevance of life everywhere, when I was in the Navy some years later, during the war, I was assigned to the OSS, the intelligence agency, and on one of the first days this old spy-thriller movie was duly shown to us in the official course of our orientation. My collaborator, talented but benighted, had been distrustful. He had been discomfited by the things we had seen, was affronted and disapproving, and passed on. But for me what had taken place was now in the nature of a phenomenon. I knew a massive exertion had been put forth. I knew it was a head-breaking feat of will and strength, a feat certainly beyond me. I thought of the producer, overworked and beset on all sides, doggedly bearing down on his task, never once letting himself lose heart. My mind went back to the director, with his scarf, with his erect, courtly posture and reticence, with his accumulation of who knew what special lore within him. "Isn't Fitzwilliam wonderful?" his bride had burst out impetuously to a group of us waiting in the anteroom, that morning of our first meeting. She was entranced, glowing. "He's shooting his next picture in Tahiti, and he's taking me along. He's so good to me. Oh, I love him. He is the only man in the world I could ever care for." He was sixty; he lived, I had heard, in a mansion under dark pines near the mansions of Hearst and Doheny, raced thoroughbreds from Ireland, had been to sea and had wrangled horses in Wyoming in his youth. Working in private, disregarding sightseers, outsiders, and all other distractions, this elegant, strange man had struggled with the film with a dedication and intensity which I could well imagine but couldn't fathom, and hadn't rested until he had conquered it.

We tested our pictures in Huntington Park, in out of the way small towns, towns still undeveloped and straggling. This was what the studios went by—the audience's reaction. It was bedrock for them, holy writ—the rest, all other criteria, they waved aside with a blunt, contemptuous indifference. Banks of lights were set up on top of the marquee: MAJOR STUDIO PREVIEW TONIGHT, and the people would come gathering in the chill of evening, drifting up to the theater, to the blaze of light, in their jeans and stiff cotton house dresses, their eyes wavering and uncertain. They were field-hands, workers in the citrus groves; they were miscellaneous day laborers, filling-station attendants, people newly resettled from Oklahoma and Arkansas. I saw them in our great drugstores, wandering through the gaudy aisles, staring in silence at the gewgaws and confections on the shelves, spending their money on objects which, when they took them home, they must have surely realized were unneeded and a waste. I used to stand in front of the theater and look at their loose, yielding faces, and wonder what kind of pictures could be given to them; if it was possible to reach them in any important, meaningful way; if it even made sense to try. And yet, once they were inside the movie house, a transformation occurred. Others have remarked on it. In the dark, forming a mass, they lost their individual disabilities and insufficiencies. They became informed; they became larger than themselves; a separate entity appeared, an entity that was knowing and complete. Unfamiliar and demanding as the material might be, no matter how deeply probing or delicate and sophisticated the treatment, if the picture was good, they were unfailingly affected by it and gave it its full measure of apprecia-

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tion. I witnessed it again and again, with the unlikeliest pictures, so that I was soon able to understand why the studios put such store on these sneak previews, so that I began to share their faith, so that I myself have now come secretly to believe—secretly, since I know it isn't so—that good pictures will always command a mass audience, that if a picture fails to find this mass following, then it is in reality spurious and without substance. In an interview in *Life* magazine, Joseph L. Mankiewicz said (I quote freely, from memory): "The most electrifying thing happens in the movie-house when you give the audience the truth." I knew exactly what he meant. You could almost tell the instant the picture took hold. An excitement filled into the theater, a thralldom. The people forgot they were sitting on the seats; they forgot themselves, their bodies. They lived only in the film. They were tumbled, swept along, possessed. Of course Mr. Mankiewicz didn't mean it could be just any truth. It had to be a carefully selected truth, carefully aligned and ordered. It had to be a truth that was worthy and could legitimately engage an audience. It had to have an opulence; or an urbanity; or a gaiety; a strength and assurance; a sense of life with its illimitable reach and promise. As a matter of fact, it didn't even have to be the truth. Properly stated, the sentence should have read: "The most electrifying thing happens in the movie-house when you give the audience—."

No one knew. Wizardry was involved. The studio people, with their unrelenting practicality, held solely with the instinct of the audience. These standards were basic, material, solid; everything else was frippery and phoniness. The product here was tested, exposed. There was no opportunity for illusion or deception. You *saw* the proof. And yet the exasperating dilemma remained that what you were to give the audience was a quantity really indefinable, ephemeral, everlastingly elusive. Here was the heart of the problem, the problem which was to plague and occupy me in all my time in the studios. It lay at the bottom of the commotion that went on in these places. It accounted for much of the puzzling behavior—the excesses, the hi-jinks, the strife and alarms, the wild, demented flights. It was a tantalizing, almost constantly frustrating pursuit, and the movie people gave themselves over to it with a tenacity that amounted to a kind of devotion.

We screenwriters shifted about from studio to studio, staying on one lot for a spell until a disenchantment set in and we were let go or left of our own volition and moved on to the next. Traveling around the studios, listening to the gossip at the different writers' tables in the commissaries, I heard stories about a certain outstanding movie executive who soon caught hold in my imagination and with whom I eventually became entangled. He was one of the industry's pioneers, had built his studio from the street up. Like the courtly director to whom for the sake of convenience I gave the fictitious name Fitzwilliam, he also had come out of a dim, adventurous background. He had been a bootlegger, a prizefighter, had participated in mean, degrading enterprises, had also roamed through the solitary towns of the Far West fifty years back. The studios, most of them, were not prepossessing establishments; they had been put together haphazardly over the years, additions stuck on to existing structures, projection rooms interspersed among the wardrobe and accounting departments, the whole clutter connected by a maze of stairways, ramps, crosswalks, balconies—and this movie executive prowled restlessly at all hours through the maze at his studio, looking for employees to pounce upon, for lights that should have been turned out and were left burning, to make trouble in general. He was a low-slung, pugnacious man, thoroughly hated, grasping, and always dissatisfied. "Your husband's just like me, we both don't care for money,"

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he said to my wife one evening at a party —this was later, when I had become mixed up with him and he and I knew each other—and my wife shrieked with glee from the shock. It was a totally unexpected, bizarre remark, coming from him. "He put more people in the cemetery than all the rest of them combined," a man once told me about him, sincerely marveling, big-eyed and solemn. The way I came to meet him, I was calling on a friend of mine, a much sought-after director who was making a picture at his studio; my friend and I were weaving through the maze of staircases, going out to the street, when the movie executive, coursing on his rounds there, saw us and promptly nabbed us. It was my friend's birthday that day, and the executive—courting him aggressively at the time, the disenchantment not yet having set in— insisted on celebrating the occasion, on having a drink with him, and so he dragged us back up to his office, I tagging along. Upstairs in the office, he was rattling around the room, working on my friend and putting on a show, when he suddenly broke off and turned to me. "What kind of a writer are you anyway?" he said harshly, hurriedly, getting it in. "Some people tell me you're good, other people tell me you stink."

I winced, confused and dazed, not so much offended—confused to think, in the flurry of the moment, that he had heard of me, that he knew who I was, and let down because he had expressed himself so dismally. He went right on with his shenanigans, but he had seen that wince on my face and it irked him, I could tell—it was in him to be affected because I was disappointed in him, that he had been rushed and hadn't been able to do well by himself. It stayed in his mind and rankled. From that meeting on, he kept having me brought over to his office to offer me a number of picture assignments, assignments which for one reason or another were unsuitable and I couldn't accept. He put himself out for my benefit. He became impish, teased me, revealed the softer side to his nature. "Keep quiet," he said to the coterie of assistants who surrounded him, shushing them. He wanted to do all the talking. "He didn't come up here to hear you. He heard the legend—now let him see the man," he said, and turned and faced me, grinning.

"WHAT'S THE MATTER, you don't like my money?" he chided me, as I passed up his assignments. "You got a better job some place else? What are you trying to prove to me, that you're a fine rabbi? You giving me the con, getting me fat and sweet, and then you'll move in and make a killing?" He couldn't believe a writer would turn down an assignment just because the material was unsuitable. He thought there had to be a deeper, intricate motivation. He thought I was maneuvering. "Everybody that walks into this office is a prostitute," he said. "They don't come in here unless they're out for something. Everybody cares only for their self-interest. Here, I'll show you—I got it right in my desk. . . ." He pulled the paper out. It was a garish act of betrayal by some close relative, a son or a brother. They had manipulated stock against him, had labored in an effort to push him out of his company. The betrayal had occurred many years ago, but he always kept the letter of dismissal with him—it was a comfort, he needed to believe that people were base and abject.

The funny thing was there was some substance to his suspicions about me. His studio owned a story, the basis of a story, which I liked very much and kept secretly angling for. During those turbulent interviews in his office, in the ebb and rise, I would persistently refer to this story property, mentioning what a fine picture I thought it would make, murmuring how I would be pleased to be allowed to work on it.

"You don't want to do that story," he ground out at me. "You just want to hit me for a big pot of money. If you really

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want to write it, if you got your heart and soul so set on it, then why don't you write it—who's stopping you?"

He had me. I didn't know how to answer him, and one day, after a difficult session, sawing back and forth, listening to his explosions and the flow of his bitter cynicisms, I finally agreed to go in with him in some loose, percentage arrangement, proceeding more or less on a speculative basis; and so that was how I came to work for him, that was why he told my wife I didn't care for money. I did, in fact, have my heart in the story. I sometimes think a successful motion picture story is so complex and impossibly constituted that you don't really write them—that they already exist and that you *find* them, that they're either there, somewhere, or else you're doomed. This was one of those stories, touched with grace and blessed. It went kindly. It became vigorous and spunky with life. I found, and firmly, the dramatic incubus, that enveloping cloud of anxiety against which a man moment by moment pits himself and which thereby gives a story its never-ceasing, insidious thrust. I found the theatrical image of my hero, the humor—that dancing bundle of slants, deceits, stratagems by which a man conceals his despair and which gives him an instantaneous hold on the attention of the audience. Best of all, what delighted me, was a lyricism—I caught, and was able to show, those innermost dreams and raptures the steady dissolution of which infuses a man's despair with meaning and a piercing, significant emotion.

"It's a wonderful story," he told me, when I had finished it and had turned it in. He had stayed up all night with the script, I knew; he had studied it meticulously, section by section. I sang inside of me. He knew the story perfectly, savored each value, each shading. "It's the story of you and your wife," he twitted me. "It's autobiographical. You can't make up things like this. They have to happen. It's the best story I ever read," he said, crashing down on me. "I wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole—it'll be a colossal flop."

He wouldn't touch it because nobody was interested in horse-race betting (if we assume the subject of this story had to do with the horses), but he flung that out carelessly, on the run; because it was different, flukey; because it wasn't enough for a picture to be original—just because a picture was new and different, it didn't necessarily mean it would go; because it was ambitious and hard to manage and fragile; because if a story like this one miscarried, it would splatter and become a hideous, total fiasco; because a screenplay was nothing but a blueprint, a declaration of hopes and intentions; because it needed actors, handlers, diviners who would know surely what to do with it and who could be counted on to bring it off. "Get me a big star," he said, in spite of his arguments, reversing himself, "and I'll do it. Get me a big director," he told his subordinates, and they in turn came hurrying to tell me; and it struck me, so that it remains with me still, how this harsh, rampaging man, who was universally detested, whose fingers were fearfully twisted with arthritis, who just recently had undergone surgery for cancer (a secret, which I knew only through the indiscretion of a friend, a doctor), although, oddly, it was a heart seizure that took him off a year and a half later—it struck me how he fiercely persevered with his obsession, asking no quarter, staying up all night in the dead quiet of his studio.

While I was at the studio on this bout, it happened that an old acquaintance was simultaneously working there. He was brought in on a one-picture deal, a picture which he had initiated and was to produce for the management. As could be predicted, he quickly became embroiled with the executive, and I had an inside view of their curious, intensive battle over the stretch of months. This acquaintance was a man I knew from earlier days in New York; he was a bril-

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liant Broadway producer with a distinguished record of successes, who also at intervals busied himself in motion pictures and who—I never clearly understood why, because he said I reminded him of all his uncles—had befriended me and took a continuing, fitful interest in my welfare. He was a vivid individual, with a surging, autocratic style. He had made fortunes, had lost them, acted on fancy and was always on the move. He would come swooping down on me in Hollywood, find out what I was doing, immediately rant and lash out at me for wasting my time; he would call up my agent and fire him, call up the heads of the studios where I was working (people who most often didn't even know I was in their employ), drub them in the most forceful, intemperate language—"He's working for *you*? You should be working for *him*"—hang up and go spinning off again, to resume his journeyings. "Don't, *don't* write short stories about me," he would say, grimacing with distaste, after he had read in a magazine some piece of disguised fiction I had written about him, "—novels, novels!" He lived in a cocoon. "A son is a fantasy," he would say, his eyes shining, believing in children, in whatever would enhance life. "You don't have to excite yourself and try to show me how bright, how talented you are—just listen," he would say, when I would think of something to add to the conversation. He wanted to do all the talking too. "Read *Life on the Mississippi*." "Never write about people who can't manipulate their destinies." And he would hustle out to the airport, get himself settled in his sleeping berth on the plane, take a dose of sleeping tablets, tuck the blankets tidily around him, and be wafted off to London or Peru.

BUT DURING THIS PERIOD I'm writing of, he was anchored, in disgrace with fortune, obliged to work out a term at the studio, and so this made two of them, my friend and the executive. They went at it hammer and tongs, the executive with a grinning relish, almost grateful, it seemed to me, to have such a willing, supple adversary at hand. They fought over the casting, over hairdressers, over gowns, over lines of dialogue, over each separate word. I watched them cut each other up almost daily when they met at lunch in the studio private dining room. But underneath the clash of wills and the tumulting, what was really provoking them, if the truth was known, was the old basic problem of the picture, the familiar welter of uncertainties and indecisions. The mind became cauterized; it was a torment to hold on to the over-all vision of the picture—the lines of the continuity, the component sequences, the proper working place of everything in the design. It wasn't enough to go on hope or intuition or instinct. You could take nothing on sufferance. You had to *know* every moment what was happening in the picture; you had perpetually to control and understand each stroke and effect—and it was easier for them to hack away at themselves in these senseless spasms than to go on wrestling with the riddles. Just as Mr. Louis B. Mayer over at Metro had a sentimental attachment to chicken-noodle soup and provided it at less than cost at his studio's commissary, so, similarly, pickles meant something to our executive; once a week or once every two weeks, whichever it was, the great black truck from the pickle-works drew up to the curb with its terrible smell, bringing us fresh supplies—and my friend, boring in assiduously, fiendishly belabored the executive on the score of this human frailty, taking a ruthless advantage of every opening. "You're common. You fill yourself with junk. You come from a low-class, first-generation tenement life and you're still stuck away there in that Yiddish *pippik*. That's why you're worth only a measly five or six million. You have no taste, no sense of literature." At the time the contracts were worked up, there had been a hard wrangle over the control of the picture—my friend was determined not to let the

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executive have the say-so over him. The executive had craftily agreed, conceding the point, stipulating only that he, the executive, was to be brought in as arbiter in cases where my friend had differences with the other principals—the stars, the director. It proved to be a peculiarly constraining condition—a strait jacket, an affliction. My friend, who thought that he and only he alone saw the picture true, was unable to flash fire and impose orders; he had to cajole, plead—there were even excruciating instances when he had to give ground. His chest broke out in a profusion of boils. I can remember the sight of him, hurtling blindly from wall to wall in the murky maze of the staircases. I can see him now as he once went skimming over the pavement of the parking lot, panting and clawing at his chest, vowing that he wouldn't be beaten, that he would stick it out no matter what the cost. "I'll get along with everyone," he affirmed breathlessly, lost in his fervor. "Nobody'll be able to say I'm temperamental. I'll be sweet. I'll be charming—they won't even recognize it's me." As the weeks rolled on, his madness broke loose and he went past all rational behavior. He communicated with the executive in a series of wicked, fanatically labored-over, anti-Semitic memos. As the picture neared completion and everyone could see it would be at last a wonderful, resplendent hit, as the New York office of the film company tried to entice him and keep him at the studio for further commitments, he flared out into the most searing, impossible demands—that the executive was to be forbidden ever to speak to him, that the executive was to keep himself out of view. "If I walk into the private dining room and he's sitting there eating, he has to get up and leave." He wanted that put into the contract. But the New York office, in courting him, in trying to keep him at the studio, was only speaking for the executive; it was the executive who was really courting him—in spite of the vilification, in spite of the pickles and the wretched memos.

It was a strange preoccupation they had, and it chivvied them in countless ways, without let-up. Passing along through the studios in the game of musical chairs we played, I continually met with this ferment, with this reckless expenditure of energy and clamor. I never knew Mr. Mayer, was only introduced to him three or four times; but he was of course a stalwart figure, no doubt the most obstreperous of the breed, and I often glimpsed him in action, moving here and there with his retinue, vigilantly attending to everything. He walked like a czar. Jules Dassin—then beginning as a director, treading carefully—once made a photographic study of his leading lady, shading her face with the flickering play of leaves; and Mr. Mayer swiftly had him on the carpet for the shot, upbraiding him for the shadows, wanting nothing that would mar the clear, crystalline beauty of his company's stars. He lectured Jules severely on the point, so that Jules told me of the incident, startled by the older man's vehemence, by his notions, by his odd possessive insistence. It was a deep, personal involvement with Mr. Mayer, a seemingly life and death concern. When I returned to Metro on an assignment after the war, they were making *The Postman Always Rings Twice,* a picture of the violent category to which Mr. Mayer was powerfully opposed; and I was seriously cautioned for my own good never to speak of this picture aloud—it was in production on the lot and we were all to behave as though it wasn't there, he wasn't to hear of it. Years later, when the dice had taken another roll and he was out of the studio, fallen from favor, I saw him one evening at a party—idling by himself on the fringes now, no one any longer obliged to listen to him. I was again introduced to him, Miss Lillian Burns plucking me by the sleeve and bringing me over to him. He smiled graciously, in spite of adversity; he started to offer me his hand; and then Miss Burns, a vivacious lady with an impudent, mischievous bent,

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went on to mention the name of a picture I was at that particular time associated with, a big hit which was also of the category he despised—and he instantly took his hand back, turned on his heel and stalked off, still haughty, still fierce, indomitable. . . . I knew of a certain director, a veteran, master movie-maker, well-tempered and suave, who one day—in the heat and struggle—suddenly went raving wild at his writer (thank God, not me), raging that the writer didn't know his craft, that he hadn't applied himself, that he hadn't been willing to dig into the *bones* of the work, that he hadn't broken his head enough at those devastating sneak previews which were our testing grounds.

I REMEMBER a curious experience with Billy Wilder: I had seen his *Sunset Boulevard* twice, was greatly moved by this work of art, sent him a fan letter. A little while later it happened that I met him for the first time, and to my astonishment he spent the greater part of our meeting inquiring into a section of the film—the section where the hero first wanders into that gauzy, soft-lit mansion of Norma Desmond, the faded movie star. The picture was out, playing in the houses, acclaimed, but the sequence still vexed Mr. Wilder. He didn't know what was working there, why it should be sound. He wasn't on top of it, couldn't rationalize it; and he worried away at the problem, probing and trying to reassure himself. In another case, not far from the studio where *Sunset Boulevard* was made, a writer-director—who had finally rationalized his picture, who knew in his heart he controlled and was on top of it—was nevertheless engaged in a furious, running feud with the head of his studio (always the same pattern, always somehow that grueling, drawn-out battle between the two). "I'm so sure this will be the biggest disaster we've ever had in the history of the studio, that I'm putting it in writing," the head of the studio wrote him, dating and signing his memo. The writer-director swept on, uncaring. They tested their picture in some small town up north, Sausalito or San Anselmo—and the audience howled it down, they ripped it to pieces. Everything went wrong. The writer-director disappeared for days. No one knew where he was or what was happening to him. But then there he was back at the studio again, locked up in the cutting room, working over the movieola, grim and spinning and searching, never pausing until he got it right. He won out in the end—the picture became one of the all-time classics, the studio was festooned with honors. . . . It was always surprising how underneath the outcries and confusion the work steadily went on. They never slackened; fighting the *malach ha-moves* and the dingy seepage of time, they beat away to the limits of their strength and endowments, striving to get it right, to run down the answers, to realize and secure the picture. I was once brought in with a producer and director, a famous mismatched pair who were noted for their rows and the rigors of their professional efforts, and so this time I was in the eye of the storm, caught up in the middle between them. This producer's trouble was his compassion, his kindliness and understanding. He had lived five lifetimes in one, was intelligent, sensitive, and had a ready, inundating sorrow. "Darling, sweetheart, why are you blue?" he would beseech his gifted partner, pursuing him. "Do you want my beach house? Do you want my boat, my car?" In retaliation, the director—who was the one I was supposed to work with—savagely turned himself inside out to think up new ways of torturing him. He was harrowed enough with the dilemmas of the script—"they expect us to work up a screenplay out of a ketchup label." He contrived mean, elaborate practical jokes. We took off in all directions, traveling by train and plane—ostensibly for purposes of research, to scout locations. We crisscrossed the country. We were gone for weeks and the weeks turned into months. The director entertained royally wherever

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we went, holding big drinking parties every day before and after dinner, sitting down thirty and forty guests at a clip for dinner, everything charged to the producer. The producer wept and fumed at long range, laying the blame on me.

"That's why I put you in with him—to watch out and be a restraining influence," he reproached me piercingly over the phone, all hot and scrambled. "Him we knew for a lunatic, that was foregone. But you are a family man, with responsibilities —why do you conspire with him against me?"

"*I'll* speak to him," the director said to me that day in the hotel room, taking the phone from me. "Ben," he declaimed into the mouthpiece, speaking in his hearty, royal way, "how are you?"

"Don't ask me how I am; never mind how I am!" the producer railed at him, his voice whirling aloft, and for a minute or two I could hear him carrying on there in his frenzy three thousand miles away.

"Ben, I've got good news for you and bad," the director boomed, unperturbed.

"Don't tell the bad!" the producer wailed. "Bad news I got, all I can use. I don't need more. Only tell me the good—what is the good?"

"Ben, we are leaving New Orleans tonight."

"Darling, sweetheart!" the producer cried, ecstatic, gushing, everything changed—bygones would be bygones; they would forget what transpired; they would go forward now only in harmony. "So what is the bad news—what can be bad?"

"We're going to New York," the director said.

IT WENT ON like that on that trip and on other trips, for a number of years, in great capitals and over four continents. I dropped out, to work for other directors and producers, but they skirmished along, harassing each other day by day, the director systematically making the producer's life a hell, the two of them evolving in the meantime between them a group of the most beguilingly rare, iridescent productions—until at last the director shamed himself irreparably before the producer and was forced to bring their relationship to a permanent end. "Darling, sweetheart," I can still hear the producer crying, desolate and engulfed, his eyes hungering to forgive, to forget, to let bygones be bygones. But the director had offended too deeply and there was no going back for him. "If I could only find an honest Ben Soinso," he often mutters to himself, pining for his friend, disconsolate and wretched.

They knew the wandering lassitude of the will, the essential human servitude and unworthiness. They knew how loathesome it was to be obliged to transgress, to commit iniquity and betray, and that the pity was with the wrongdoer. They were a chastened crew, with a wry, flickering wisdom. Coming out of their raw, bustling background, combing the earth with their energy and avid need for pleasure, they had the kind of education you get in the prize-ring—not from hearsay or from precept. They knew the *guderim*. Isn't it true that a good deal of what we know of the world comes from these men—from their pictures, from their lore? Isn't it true that they have had an amazingly penetrating effect, people in countries all over the globe running eagerly to see their pictures, to share in their virility, in their realism and gusto and command of life? I think it is a foolish scandal that we have the habit of deriding these men and their industry, that it is the mode. Is it fitting to pass by so indifferently the work of Ford, Stevens, Wilder, Mankiewicz, Huston, Zinnemann, William Wellman, Howard Hawks, Sam Wood, Clarence Brown, Victor Fleming, William Van Dyke, King Vidor, Raoul Walsh, Henry Hathaway, Henry King, Chaplin, Lubitsch, Goldwyn, Selznick, Milestone, Capra, Wyler, Cukor, Kazan? They were a gaudy company, rambunctious and engrossed. What they produced, roistering along in those sun-filled, spar-

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kling days, was a phenomenon, teeming with vitality and ardor, as indigenous as our cars or skyscrapers or highways, and as irrefutable. Generations to come, looking back over the years, are bound to find that the best, most solid creative effort of our decades was spent in the movies, and it's time someone came clean and said so.

THERE IS NO RKO any longer. The studio on Gower Street is given over to other pursuits. The child who was born that day, when I was struggling with the mystery-thriller, with my distinguished collaborator, is now full grown, busy with his own affairs, away from home. In the middle of the night the phone rings and we rouse from sleep. "It's Adele," my wife says to me, carefully covering the mouthpiece with her hand to spare the caller's feelings, and then she removes her hand and they go on talking over the phone. Adele is a once famous star, now inactive, unwanted, the years having flown. We don't know Adele and she doesn't know us. Originally she was looking for some people named Ridgway, a family who used to live in our house. She knows the Ridgways aren't here, my wife tells her; but she likes the sound of my wife's voice, it is a solace, and in the dead hours of the night she continues to phone, prolonging this curious friendship that has formed between them. "Is this Mr. Ridgway's residence?" she begins shyly, and my wife says no, soft and solicitous, and they commune.

HOW ILLUSORY is the nature of desire; how wonderfully strange and various are the strivings of the hidden heart. Long ago, I was assigned (by the same diligent, untiring producer who was involved in the mystery-thriller upset, not that it matters) to help with a story of backstage life which was supposed to be fictitious but was actually based on the true experiences of another star, an actress then at the height of her success, fresh and vibrant, with that incredible shining beauty they have. When she was fourteen years old, she had been tampered with by a passing entertainer. Her aunt, with whom she lived, was an ambitious woman. She immediately took hold of the opportunity; forced the entertainer to marry her niece; left her own husband and latched on; and in this way the two of them, the aunt and the niece, escaped from their depression-ridden New England industrial town and gained a foothold in show business. The entertainer, burdened with a wife he didn't want and with this overbearing aunt in the bargain, ducked and weaved, eventually managed to shake free; he drifted off. The two went on by themselves. The girl scored, going straight to the top in one of those dazzling overnight leaps. The entertainer made a rapid turnabout, clamored after his wife, publicly protested he was being abandoned, slashed his wrists a little. A settlement was arranged; the matter was taken care of.

This was the story behind the star's rise to fame. These were the facts, bedraggled and humanly forlorn, as they were commonly known, as we had them to deal with. We improvised. We glossed. We inserted a few nobilities. The entertainer became a tragic figure, genuinely in love, genuinely bereaved; when he attempted suicide, he succeeded. The fourteen-year-old—now seventeen—was purely a victim, innocent and unthinking. We changed New England to Oklahoma; we made the aunt a sister, so that she might be more readily cast, sisters being less aged than aunts. We were having enough trouble trying to cast the leading role. For a long time we were stumped, it seemed altogether impossible to find the right actress. Acting on a sudden, desperate brainstorm, we decided to offer the part to the star herself. She read the script—astonishingly, it went straight past her. She never recognized herself in the drama. "You know," she said to us at lunch, as we were wooing her, "this might almost be the story of me and my aunt."

She turned us down, the part disturbing her, and in any case she was much too

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grand in those days for our modest project; the picture went out with another player. But the years passed by, twelve or fourteen, and it happened that we fell in with one another again, the actress appearing in another picture I was concerned with, amenable now, subdued. She knew by this time the backstage story had been about her—someone had told her or she had come to it herself; I often caught her glance upon my face—rueful, bemused. "Do you want to know what really happened, sonny?" she said to me one day on the set, when there was a lull in the activity, when we all stood by and everything idled.

She was dead game, conceding nothing to time. The legs were muscled, hard and used, the hard, unkind lines showing. That pearly, short-lived radiance was gone. I remembered the stories I knew about her, how when she used to make public appearances in the big movie houses, she would go darting up to the balcony between shows with a companion, to look at the picture, to neck.

There had been no tampering, no seduction. No one had had his way with her. There had been no hasty marriage. It had been all her own idea, on her own initiative. It was odd how the facts were scrambled. The entertainer had been a friend of the family, was going with an older cousin, was engaged. When she was fourteen years old, she had watched the courtship from the distance, had quietly set her cap for him. "I thought he was the handsomest man I had ever seen in my life," she told me that afternoon. "I wanted him. I made up my mind. I went for him. I got him. I knew how. And then, later. . . ." She shrugged, her voice fell away; she turned aside, smiling and helpless, dreaming. "You change," she said. "Time passes. . . ." She wandered off and left me—someone called her name. It was the time of day on the set when the mood grows gray, when the electricians and grips yawn and the work goes soft, when extras and bit-players—out of monotony, to beguile the moments away—face one another and start jiggling on their feet, dancing by themselves in this unspoken, sleepy mockery, the faces of the girls flushed and wicked and tempted, when the air is filled with longing and the promise of better things seems just around the bend.

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BRUNO BETTELHEIM

DOES COMMUNAL EDUCATION WORK?

The Case of the Kibbutz

TODAY, WHEN THERE exists such widespread dissatisfaction with our educational system, a radically different one might be expected to hold great interest for us—especially one thriving among people like ourselves, of Western background. It is therefore astonishing how little attention has been paid to the fascinating educational venture embarked on some four decades ago by the more radical socialist kibbutzim of Israel: that of the communal rearing of their children—the only such experiment, outside the Iron Curtain, in a modern technological society.*

Our own American Hutterites offer a less instructive case—they are tradition-bound agricultural communities, deliberately shunning modern developments. Yet the ultra-conservative, extremely devout Hutterites share with the socialist and atheistic kibbutzim one very striking feature: the children of both groups, reared communally in children's homes by professional educators rather than by their families, grow up into adolescents and adults free of the asocial behaviors that worry us most—delinquency, criminality, sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, etc. In general the incidence of severe emotional disturbance among them is extremely low as compared with our society at large. Perhaps more important, the Hutterite communities, like the radical Israeli kibbutzim, are "exceedingly effective in rearing their children to live up to the basic moral principles which they share with the larger society."

To be sure, the experiments conducted during the early days of the Russian revolution in the communal rearing of children failed and were discontinued. On the other hand, from Anton Makarenko's *Road to Life,* we know of his great success after the civil war in rehabilitating the wild children of Russia (*besprizornys*) through communal rearing. Reports from those who

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* This is a study from the distance: my own knowledge of kibbutz education is not firsthand. I have based my remarks on the few scientific reports that we have: Melford E. Spiro's *Children of the Kibbutz* (Harvard University Press, 1958); Elizabeth E. Irvine's "Observations on Child Rearing in Communal Settlements in Israel" (*Human Relations,* 1952); several papers by Albert I. Rabin—"Personality Maturity of Kibbutz and Non-Kibbutz Children as Reflected in Rorschach Findings" (*Journal of Projective Techniques,* 1957), "Infants and Children Under Conditions of 'Intermittent' Mothering in the Kibbutz," "Attitudes of Kibbutz Children to Family and Parents," "Kibbutz Adolescents" (*American Journal of Orthopsychiatry,* 1958, 1959, 1961)—and some others. In addition, I have had conversations over a long period of time with persons who spent years as educators in the kibbutz movement. Some, still active in their posts, visited with us for months at a time at the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School at the University of Chicago. Others, who had left the kibbutz, worked with us. And others still, who had been originally with us and left to teach in a kibbutz, later returned to report their experiences.

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have recently visited the children's villages in the Soviet Union suggest that their young inmates are sad and passive—institutionalized—as in the earlier days of Soviet Communism. However, these observers note that the villages are badly understaffed, with untrained, indifferent adults.*

We may conclude from what we know of these particular experiments that the success or failure of communal child rearing seems to depend on the size of the group, the adult-child ratio, and, above all, the attitude of those in charge of the children. Whatever has been true in Russia (or in China), we know that the children of the kibbutzim are raised in small groups and cared for by a skilled and devoted staff. What happens under such conditions is surely full of implications for our own educational methods.

IN THIS RESPECT the kibbutz† is unique. Nowhere else during modern times has a community of highly intelligent and educated Europeans so seriously tried to free the child from a dependence on his natural parents. Within days after birth, the child enters the communal nursery. There his own age group takes the place of what we would call his family of origin—for it alone remains stable over the years; the adults who rear the children—nurses, child-care workers, and teachers—are replaced periodically. The nursery group consists of a maximum of sixteen babies—but usually fewer—all housed and cared for together. Older children are organized into smaller age groups and live in cottages within the kibbutz. Having at birth acquired full rights in the children's autonomous society, the child remains a member until his graduation from high school, at which time he is elected to adult membership in the kibbutz if he so desires—and almost all do. It must be added that the child's parents during the years of his education have no individual rights of control or decision over any aspect of his life.

Most published American critiques of kibbutz child rearing, following the general line of American psychologists and psychiatrists, declare that the children suffer severely from communal education. Judging on the basis of our own values, these critics find particularly damaging the fact that the children are separated from their parents, do not have their own mothers to minister to them, have to share the attention of their caretakers with several other children, and undergo not infrequent changes in these caretaking persons.** These observers are also influenced by reports on the personality development of institutionalized children. We may take John Bowlby†† as their spokesman when he says that "essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother."

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* Strumilin, deputy chairman of the Soviet State Planning Commission, has declared that he foresees for the future an almost total separation of children from parents, the children to be brought up in state-run collectives from infancy on. And Khrushchev, at the 21st Party Congress, referred to his plan for training all children in such boarding schools, in which he predicted two and a half million children would be settled by 1965.

† I wish to emphasize that I have drawn my facts from the radical socialist kibbutzim. In the mid-1950's, the kibbutz movement underwent a crisis brought on by external political events (see Gerda Luft's "The Kibbutz in Crisis," COMMENTARY, October 1961). In many of the kibbutzim a split occurred between the more and the less radical groups, and the latter have since begun to compromise both toward a less socialistic economy and a more conventional system of child rearing. It is difficult to foresee the future of the kibbutzim; whatever happens will not be caused by the shortcomings of their educational methods, but by economic and political events too vast for these collectives to withstand unchanged.

** Contrary to the general opinion, Rabin found that, studied at ages nine to eleven and compared with a control group, the "kibbutz children do not reflect . . . any deleterious effects due to the alleged early maternal 'deprivation.' There is some evidence that the kibbutz children show greater personality maturity than do the controls." He also found no indications of a greater uniformity of personality among children reared together under kibbutz conditions.

†† *Maternal Care and Mental Health* (World Health Organization, Geneva, 1951).

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But what exactly constitutes warm, intimate relations and continuity? It is true that the educators in charge of the children in the kibbutz are not always available to *all* the children in their care, and that the care by any one person is intermittent (days off, relief periods, etc). But during the time the nursery workers are with the children, no other demands whatsoever are made on them—the child has the full attention of the mothering person. The nursery workers receive appreciation for their trained child care; they are relieved of housekeeping duties, enjoy regular periods of freedom from the children, have the stimulation of adult companionship after their day's work is done. Most important, they are not beset by a parent's typical anxieties—the hopes and fears we harbor about children who are ours. What then is truly continuous, and what is intermittent? Does not a consistent, if only intermittent, mothering nevertheless equip the child with a continuous inner image of mothering? And may it not be that a mother who spends a great deal of time with her child, but is sometimes loving and giving, and at other times demanding, or irritated, or just plain worn down—is it not possible that such a mother can just fail to give the child a permanent inner image of good mothering?

THE MOST intimate contact between mother and infant is that of breast feeding. Now, while a vast majority of kibbutz mothers breast-feed their babies, the opposite is true of American mothers. Nearly all kibbutz mothers are able to nurse, love to do it, try very hard to stretch out the nursing period for as long as possible. When an infant seems to want to be fed, a flag is hoisted of the color known to each mother as her own. If she does not see it immediately, another member of the kibbutz calls out to her, and she is with her hungry baby within minutes. Nursing is a social event in which the entire community takes an interest, and mothers come to the nursery four or five times a day to feed their babies. Nor does the mothering instinct seem to be interfered with by communal rearing: many who take so much pleasure in nursing their babies were themselves brought up in kibbutz nurseries.

In contrast, bottle feeding, with much earlier weaning, is the rule in America. Where, we might ask those authors who decry the lack of intimacy between mother and child in the kibbutz, does the child experience the more "functional" intimacy with his mother—there or here? Spiro also notes that since kibbutz mothers usually "nurse their babies at the same time as well as in the same place . . . even the intimacy of mother love is not private." But what, we may go on to ask, constitutes the more intimate relation: mother and infant alone in a house—with perhaps the bottle propped up in the crib, or at best the baby held in the mother's arm—or an "unprivate" setting in which the nursing infant is held regularly to the mother's body?

Moreover, Spiro's objection to lack of "privacy" is characteristic of a whole set of attitudes and unexamined assumptions that inhere in American discussion of kibbutz child rearing. Space forbids lengthy consideration of all aspects of this child rearing, and since nursing stands at the beginning of the mother-child relation, I shall examine it further, as my principal example.

Recently, when an effort was made to study infant development in one of our large Eastern cities, only mothers who bottle-fed their children were willing to participate. The nursing mothers felt it to be indecent, if not obscene, to permit anyone, except perhaps the father, to be present when they fed the baby. But the whole issue turned out to be largely theoretical, because the percentage of breast-feeding middle-class mothers was incredibly small when compared, for example, with the kibbutz mothers we are discussing. What these findings suggest is that mother love, as expressed in breast feeding, seems more

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likely to exist when and where it is not kept private.

Is it possible that the privatization of so much of modern middle-class life is not the consequence, but rather the cause, of that human isolation from which modern man suffers, and which the kibbutz way of life has tried to counteract? Nor can one simply say that what is felt to be shameful is therefore made private; usually, in the history of civilization, it is the other way around. Perhaps when we consider that the nursing of infants seems to be possible for nearly all mothers in the communal setting of the kibbutz, we may see a reason for the converse condition: the large number of middle-class mothers who find themselves unable to nurse their children.

Spiro critically observes of the kibbutz mothers that "nursing becomes a social occasion in which gossip and conversation can be shared with other mothers while she shares her milk with her baby." But he adds, "in general nursing proceeds at a relaxed pace." I venture to say that it *is* relaxed for mother and infant precisely because it takes place in so pleasant and social an atmosphere.

A first important change occurs when the infant is six months old. He then may be taken from the nursery cottage to his parents' home for about an hour in the early evening. At approximately one year, the child moves from the nursery to the toddlers' house and his group gets reduced in size to about eight. At this age the child may remain with his parents in their quarters for two hours or so every evening, and most of the day on Saturdays.

THE CHILD will now live continuously with these seven others—his age peers—until graduation from high school. At about the fourth or fifth birthday, that is, at kindergarten age, the group again numbers up to sixteen by the merging of two toddler groups. This enlarged group remains steadily together until they reach high school age and join with others just entering high school.

From the earliest age on, the children learn to interact with little or no adult supervision. If a child is afraid at night, or becomes ill, his companions take care of him: play with him, talk to him, bring him water, and in general reassure him. Having intimately shared his experiences, they know what he is likely to be afraid of; and the anxious child, trusting his comrades, will confide in them.*

In a very short while, the child ceases to wake up afraid in the middle of the night, so absolutely secure does he feel with the other children. Group living makes it possible for the kibbutz child to enjoy much more of that inner security which we put so much stress on, but which many middle-class American infants—alone with their anxieties in their own rooms—fail to find.

Yet American observers (Irvine, Spiro) deplore "the rather unstimulating and frustrating environment of the child under three, and the limited physical and emotional content which he often has with his caretaker." They also deplore that "the child from the earliest age is expected to subordinate his own needs to the needs of the group." But are the children he lives with not a powerful stimulation? Is it frustrating to a child always to have with him a companion, a friend, some other children to watch; or is it a matter of greater contentment to be so often only with adults—or with no company at all? Are elaborate toys and equipment more rewarding than the uninterrupted company of age mates? And are not each child's own needs also those of the group? Why, one may ask, is the *coordination* of needs viewed by the American observer as *subordination*?

Perhaps such American evaluations spring from what may roughly be likened to a consumer psychology of child develop-

* For the Hutterite child, too, his peer group is the prime social agent that educates him and cares for his emotional needs. What Joseph W. Eaton and Robert J. Weil report about them in *Culture and Mental Disorders* (The Free Press, 1955) could have been written about the kibbutzim.

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ment. The underlying conviction seems to be that regardless of the individual's ability to enjoy or to master a thing, the more he acquires of it and the sooner, the better—be it concentrated attention, toys, food, or emotional involvement. None of us knows how much or what kind of stimulation is best for the young child. But the frequency and anxiety with which I am asked about how to get children to share with others suggests that perhaps our children do not learn the lesson early in life of how to coordinate their own needs with those of others for successful relationships.

Kibbutz children are actually much closer to their parents in some ways than most American children—if not to their parents as persons, then as members of the community. It is the kibbutz (that is, their parents' way of life) which is central to all learning, formal and informal, in the children's village. From the toddlers' school on, the children take daily hikes to visit their parents at work. At the machine shops, the barns, the olive groves, the children are stopped by adults, talked to, joked with, praised, perhaps asked to lend a hand, and when met by their parents, hugged. Thus the child is made to feel a welcome and important part of his father's and mother's occupational activities, and those of the whole community—an experience which most American children would envy them greatly. So, too, all big communal events in the kibbutz, such as holiday celebrations, are related to work that parents and children both have a part in (the festival of the first fruits, arbor day, the harvest festival, etc.).

THE SYSTEM OF parental abdication in the rearing of the child was fashioned by the founders of the kibbutz movement out of their ideological convictions. Behind it was the idea that those who established the kibbutzim had grown up in a decadent society, injurious to human freedom and dignity. Nor could any society be regenerated, the kibbutzniks believed, except through the regeneration of the individual, who in turn was viewed as being largely the product of the education he received.

The specific objectives of this system of collective education were: (1) to abolish parental authority, particularly the patriarchal authority of the father; (2) to free the female from the impediment of being assigned only a few special roles in society, such as homemaking and child rearing; (3) to perpetuate the value system of the communal society; and (4) to provide the children with the most democratic education possible. It was hoped that freeing the parents of the need to care for and educate their children would bring the parent-child relation to rest mainly on positive emotions. Since, also, the community as a whole would be responsible for his physical well-being, the child would not be beholden to any particular person, and least of all to his parents.

Any system of child rearing can only be judged, of course, by its results, by whether or not those whom it educates behave later in life in accordance with the goals set. Now from the point of view of a communist society, an educational system is highly successful which produces citizens who embrace every tenet of communism. But can we, from our side, unambiguously recognize such a system as valid? Critics of the kibbutz tend to hold two contrary notions: that an educational system is successful if it imparts its own stated goals; and that it is successful only if it produces persons who live successfully in terms of the critics' values and standards of behavior. Because space does not permit me to review the kibbutz system in the light of both criteria, I have chosen to consider the kibbutz's own value system—which up to now most investigators have attached little importance to—as an acceptable measure of success.

Let me begin by saying that as contrasted with the vague and often contradictory goals of some of our educational enterprises, it is refreshing to encounter a system of bringing up children that starts

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out with specific goals, clearly stated and commonly understood and held. Asked to rank in importance the values they wished their educational system to instill in their children, the parents of one kibbutz, according to Spiro, replied: First and foremost, "work"; after that, in the order of importance, "love of humanity," "responsibility to the kibbutz," "good character," "intellectualism," "socialism," "Zionism," "social participation," "patriotism," and "cooperation." Neither emotional adjustment nor success in competition was mentioned: adjustment was viewed as implicit in achieving the first four of the values given, while personal advancement was contrary to all their values in general (and to the first in particular), since by work they meant cooperative work in the kibbutz. Thus, queried also as to which ambitions they hoped their children would realize, kibbutz members ranked being a good comrade first, and being a good worker second.

FROM ALL available evidence, the results of kibbutz education are unequivocal: the stated main goals are achieved and to a degree that has no parallel in Western education. True, this is not what most American observers report; nearly all of them have selected and interpreted data to support the correctness of our own notions of child rearing and personality development. But on the basis of my examination of the whole body of data, I am convinced that kibbutz education has had a success of a kind that might well lead us to reconsider some of our own assumptions and values throughout the entire field of education.

In the kibbutz classroom, there is no competition for grades; grading does not determine the success or failure of a student—nor is there any grading of teachers, for promotions. The atmosphere is free; to the American observer it often seems chaotic. The children come and go as they please, and there are no specific assignments or homework; I am tempted to say there is only good teaching. Youngsters of all ages are highly motivated to learn, and study without pressure.

On waking in the morning, the children generally read until it is time to get up; they also read at rest times and on many such other occasions. Reading books of their own choosing—generally what we would call serious reading matter—appears to be the children's favorite pastime. As they grow older, they carry increasing kibbutz work assignments in addition to their academic program. By the time they reach senior high school they are doing three hours of daily work in the field or the shops. During the two-month summer vacation, carrying a full daily work load on the kibbutz, high-school youngsters also read an average of ten books of history, biography, or science. At graduation, their educational achievement is far superior to that of the average American high school graduate.

How do these habits and values carry over later on? These children, born of intellectual Jews, when they take their place in the adult kibbutz, devote themselves of their own free will to manual labor in an agricultural settlement often surrounded by hostile Arabs; frequently working ten hours a day to cultivate the desert, they live with a minimum of material possessions, and like the way they live. Both competitive ambition and long-range mobility goals, in our sense, are meaningless in their society.

But what of the primary motive for creating this educational system—that of freeing the child from dependence on his parents? Has this goal been realized too? The question must be of particular interest to American parents in view of our general concern over the emotional difficulties that we encounter in relations with our children.

The system does indeed work in making the child independent of his parents—only too well for the taste of most Western observers, since they believe that little good can come of such early and radical separa-

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tion of children and parents. But it also works too well for the original founders of the kibbutz who, it seems, get more than they had bargained for.

The relations of these children to their kibbutz parents are to an astonishing degree free of those all too intense ambivalences of love and hate, of the desired and resented dependencies, which characterized relations between the founders of the kibbutz and *their* parents—and, I might add, which are also typical in the relations of white middle-class American children and their parents.* But though the relations of kibbutz-educated children to their parents and to each other are amazingly uncomplicated, straightforward, and unneurotic, they are at the same time—and here is the rub—comparatively lacking in intensity. This absence of intensity is viewed with alarm both by investigators and by kibbutz parents themselves. Blood simply is not thicker than shared emotional experiences; it is the latter that tie people together. The strong positive feelings of the child who is reared communally are concentrated on his "family" of upbringing, the children with whom he uninterruptedly shared all the experiences of infancy, childhood, and adolescence.

I SHOULD LIKE to offer here a few speculations which seem sound to me though I cannot offer any strong evidence to support them. For these kibbutz-educated children the absence of deep involvement with their parents meant there was no need to revolt or prove themselves in any way against their elders—by surpassing them economically or socially or morally—in order to achieve personal worth. Now, the need for individuation is a correlate of the fear of anonymity. In a mass society, to be more than a "number," to be "known," one has to be near unique, and once "known," one must wage a continuous struggle to remain in the limelight or at the top—even if one cares little for the opinions of others. Much that passes in our society for ambition, social climbing, the desire to get ahead of the Joneses, is basically motivated by a desperate effort simply to escape personal anonymity.

In the middle-class American family, the child's deep emotional, economic, and social dependence leads to a personality structure developed in response to the unique stresses, strains, and rewards that the family imposes. But the child then feels the need to fight free of dependence on his parents by developing a unique personality that is different from theirs. This striving becomes still more urgent where the modern mass society threatens the individual with anonymity.

Kibbutz-educated children feel no such defensive need to develop a unique personality. Each of them is safe from anonymity because he is well known to all who count in his human surroundings. He need not assert his difference from his parents because he was never so utterly dependent on them that he must now fight for his separate identity. In addition, he shares the "individuality" of the kibbutz, with which he is deeply identified, to a degree unknown and impossible in modern mass society.†

* Using a projective test designed to elicit data on conflict and stress, Rabin found that about two-thirds of an American control group projected conflicts with parents, or conflicts about leaving the home background, as against less than a fifth of kibbutz adolescents. Yet this test and others revealed no difference between kibbutz-reared adolescents and the controls with respect to *positiveness of attitude* toward parents. Assuming then that parents are a main source of children's anxiety (as they are also the main source of security, though Rabin's studies contain no direct measures of the latter), the kibbutz child's emotional distance from his parents should reduce his anxiety; and indeed, the kibbutz youngsters, as compared to the controls, were found to react with less anxiety and inhibition on the Rorschach test. They were also more productive than the controls, emphasized more satisfying themes such as play and orality, and revealed fewer aggressive tendencies.

† This is why small societies were able to be egalitarian, truly democratic. It is not the institution of the town-hall meeting that defines a true democracy; both democracy and the town-hall meeting are made possible and effective when every member of the community knows every other member of the community as a person.

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It may be true that the kibbutz-reared sabras in their intimate relations and their self-realization lack the subtle nuances of an individuation they might have acquired in our society. However, they are in many ways rugged individualists who care only about living up to their own standards, about how they appear to themselves and not whether others approve of them, though with one important qualification: anyone's individuality must have been partly formed by the ethos of the kibbutz.

As noted before, much of the American discussion of kibbutz education sees replacements in the staff of the communal school as the central weakness of the system, a factor which necessarily causes emotional disturbances in the children. But if child-care workers remained the same during most of the children's infancy and childhood they would simply have turned out to be parents by another name. By entrusting the child's total education to workers who are replaced—though not too often—the kibbutz system prevents him from forming either positive or negative identifications with the whims, idiosyncrasies, or emotional constellation of one or two particular adults. Instead it forces him to organize his life along the consistent patterns and values of the *community,* held in common by all the adults: the ones who take care of him and the others living around him.

Indeed, the kibbutz idea has corroborated many of the experimental practices we have instituted at the Orthogenic School at the University of Chicago. For example, many children who came to us near death by self-starvation (anorexia) began to eat in the confusion—and diffusion—of emotions that attended eating with a larger group of noisy and disorderly children. Alone with an adult emotionally concentrated on him, the child could not eat, even if the adult made no demands about such things as orderliness.

True, these were not typical children. But it is common knowledge that among normal children the feeding problems are often most acute with the firstborn who eats alone with his mother. By the time the table is noisy with brothers and sisters the food disappears in short order. The mother must concentrate on producing the food, not on seeing that it is consumed. Still, this is true mainly for informal meals. At dinner time in the middle class family, there is of course much pressure for decent table manners, often with repeated correcting or outright nagging.

In the children's houses of the kibbutz, during meals, there is a great deal of laughter, chatter, and singing, as there is also whining. Spiro describes such a typical meal. One child begins to sing, and soon all join in or begin to jabber; one yells, another claps his hands, and the others follow suit. One child climbs under the table, the rest yell and laugh. Such meals are social and socializing occasions, not for adults but for the children. Just as we socialize around a dinner eaten adult style, so they socialize around a meal eaten toddler style. True, the adults serving the children have little relaxation, but then they know they will soon be sitting down in peace with their own peers. Nurses seldom have difficulty in persuading the children, even those who are not hungry, to come to the table, so much do the children enjoy their mealtime.

For the individual kibbutz child, this child-centered system pays off, handsomely. Absent are the frustrations of all kinds: dependencies satisfied but made guilt-ridden; injunctions imposed, together with guilt for transgressing them; needs projected by adults onto the child, and the anxiously feared and expected developments. In their place are deep, permanent, extremely meaningful and mutually satisfying attachments of the youngsters to each other. These children who grew up together in the new system readily give for each other—their life's comrades—everything: fortune, even life itself.

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That their interest in their parents, by comparison, is hardly equal in intensity should have been anticipated. If we remove ourselves from the lives of our children, they are not necessarily the worse off for it—in some ways perhaps even much better off; but we are then not very important in their lives. Still, this logical consequence is a distinct disappointment to most of the first-generation kibbutz parents (and much deplored by American observers).

Yet in other respects these kibbutz parents are richly rewarded. From all descriptions, the children turn into exceptionally courageous, self-reliant, secure, unneurotic, and deeply committed adults who find their self-realization in work and in marriage. Though most have some previous sexual experience, they marry in their early twenties and soon have children who in turn are brought up in the communal nurseries and schools. There are almost no divorces (about one per kibbutz) and adultery is rare and severely censured. Spiro remarks that these marriages are not only stable, but by American standards exceptionally satisfactory; marriage is, in fact, the most important and intimate relationship of kibbutz adults.

The adults are genuinely fond of children, their own as well as others, and this interest in children develops early. Young girls in kindergarten often assist their mothers who are nurses in younger children's houses; and girls in the grammar school frequently supervise the play of nursery children. Many of the high school girls also work in the various nurseries as afternoon relief nurses and, with rare exceptions, they are warm, loving, and intelligent workers. Later, as parents, they are warm and affectionate with their children, but relaxed and unanxious. Yet they have no desire to return to raising them privately at home; they are well satisfied with the way they themselves were communally reared. Not having experienced deep emotional attachment to parents as the core of their own development, and presently having a full life of their own, they do not feel they are missing anything by being parted from their children. Without doubt or hesitation they place their few-days'-old infants in the autonomous children's society.

We may reasonably assume that these young married couples would perhaps find their lives empty without the deep attachment of children if it were not for their work for the community, which fills such a tremendous place in their daily lives and emotions. In this connection I cannot even begin to assess what satisfactions kibbutzniks derive from living a life close to nature; and from the fact that by their labor they visibly provide for themselves and their community the things which we consider necessities but to them are cherished enrichments of living.

All that I have said, and a good deal more that remains undiscussed, suggests that a study of kibbutz education raises more questions perhaps than it answers. I feel they are questions extremely pertinent for us to think about. In particular, the study of the kibbutz educational system reveals that some of our own widely held theories on child rearing are provincial—rather than universal; though we are not therefore automatically provided with more fruitful theories for our own practice.

I am not suggesting—for all that I have said—that we adopt the kibbutz educational system. I have a great admiration for the vast expenditure of capital and human resources which the members of the kibbutzim bestow on the education of their children, and for the hardships they are willing to undergo to further their children's schooling, which is given so central an importance in the community. What we might well copy, without further study, is this attitude of seriousness toward the problems of children in their development and education.

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JOSEPH J. ZASLOFF

THE PROBLEM OF SOUTH VIET NAM

While Laos and then Berlin and then Katanga have been dominating the front pages in recent months, a situation of equally critical proportions has been building up in South Viet Nam, where the government of President Ngo Dinh Diem is struggling for survival against well-organized strongly sustained guerilla forces—the Viet Cong—inspired and supported by the Communist Viet Minh government of the North. So serious had this situation become by last October that President Kennedy sent General Maxwell Taylor to South Viet Nam for the purpose of reporting to him on the kind of measures—political as well as military—which might be taken to prevent the fall of the country to the Communists of the North.

Following General Taylor's mission, the American military and economic commitment was augmented. By mid-December, 2,000 American troops were reported to be functioning in South Viet Nam in a "training and advisory" capacity only. It is clear, however, that some of these troops were taking part in tactical operations in battle areas, and casualties have already been reported. This additional aid is presumably contingent upon a broad program of administrative and political reform which President Diem has promised to undertake. Indeed, if such reforms cannot be implemented, the unification of the whole of Viet Nam under Viet Minh hegemony may very well become impossible to prevent.

The most important aspect of the struggle at present is a contest for the allegiance of the peasantry, the largest single segment of the population. Although the peasants are politically unorganized, they constitute both the base and core of Vietnamese society and are, therefore, the medium in which the Viet Cong's guerilla activity is centered. (Mao Tse Tung has likened the peasantry to water, and guerillas to the fish that inhabit it.)

As might be expected, the effectiveness of Viet Cong activity is intimately connected with the Southern peasants' attitude toward President Ngo Dinh Diem's government: where this attitude is either neutral or hostile, the probable concomitant will be a toleration or support of the Communist guerillas that enables them to operate successfully. However, since the peasantry as a group has no organized opposition of its own through which it can protest against the Diem government, its

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support or toleration of the Viet Cong does not necessarily imply an enthusiasm for the Communists.

There are several important sources of peasant discontent. As in many other emergent areas, the processes of rapid change which the 20th century has brought to Southeast Asia, largely through the impact of colonial rule, have severely jolted traditional society, creating stresses which in turn give rise to anxiety and unrest. There is a huge gap in Viet Nam between the style of life and the aspirations of the urban elite, which runs the country, and the peasantry, which sees its rulers as aliens dedicated to altering their traditional ways. This gap has been a major factor in Diem's inability to win peasant support.

Another trouble has been the disappointment of peasant expectations for greater prosperity and social justice after French colonial rule was ended. The peasantry played an important role in the struggle for independence from France—a struggle led by the urban intellectuals who united the peasantry behind them. When the French reimposed colonial rule after World War II, nationalist guerillas, largely Viet Minh directed, utilized peasant sympathy and support in their constant harassment of the French administration. And the French discovered that it was virtually impossible to eliminate guerilla activity having a solid base in the villages: they could control the cities and the areas along main roads during the day, but at night, in the countryside, the Viet Minh ruled.

The victory over "foreign exploitation," however, did not produce the results that the peasantry had hoped for. To begin with, the nation was physically severed at the 17th parallel. Northern refugees inundated the South; political-religious sects vied for local autonomy; diverse political factions conspired to seize power; and the Communists applied violence in their agitation to overthrow the Southern regime. Under these conditions, neither democracy nor prosperity could develop. Expectations expanded more rapidly than the ability to satisfy them, and the new regime was faced with what has been called a "revolution of rising frustrations." When the French departed, the unifying symbol of the common enemy was eliminated from a society otherwise rent by divisive forces; and no strong substitute was readily available.

VIET NAM is divided into three distinct sections—the North, the Center, and the South (formerly known as Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin-China). Though the sections have actually been unified for a long period and have employed a common language, differences in dialect, custom, and tradition are nevertheless sufficiently important to make natives of each section appear somewhat as strangers to each other. President Diem and his family come from Hué, the former capital of the Center, and many of his key bureaucrats are from the Center also, or from the North. Thus to the Southern peasantry, the regime that succeeded French rule still to some extent seems an alien one.

Religious factionalism is a further source of estrangement between the Diem regime and the peasantry. The ancestor cult, with roots in Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, is the most widespread religion of the country, and, of the present sects that have developed from this cult, the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao claim several million adherents. The fact that President Diem and his family are Roman Catholics inevitably makes identification between the peasantry and the government more difficult—partly because Catholicism is a Western religion, and so, perhaps, a reminder of French rule.

A strong leader—endowed with charismatic appeal—might overcome the many divisive forces. But Diem's political background has hampered his efforts to unify the country behind him. It was Ho Chi Minh of North Viet Nam, not Ngo Dinh Diem, who was the revered leader of the Vietnamese struggle for freedom against the French. To be sure, Diem has a repu-

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tation among the intellectuals as an incorruptible opponent of French colonialism. But having more or less withdrawn from public life after resigning in 1933 from Bao Dai's cabinet in protest against French policies, and having spent a number of years abroad (some of them in Catholic seminaries in the United States and Belgium)—he was not known by the broader population as an active participant in the nationalist revolution.

An ascetic bachelor and a pious Catholic, Diem is aloof in personal life, and as the son of a prominent mandarin at the court of Hué, he often exhibits traits of the haughty aristocrat. With his rather de Gaulle-like sense of destiny he acts as if he has received a mandate from heaven to lead Viet Nam to unity, security, and even grandeur.

To consolidate his power, Diem has used the familiar techniques of the modern autocrat. Pictures of him are plastered everywhere, even in the most remote mountain villages, and banners proclaim the glory of his personal leadership throughout the countryside. The press and radio are daily filled with fulsome praise of his prowess. In recent years, despite his difficulty in overcoming his aloofness, he has circulated widely among the rural populace, attempting to inspire peasant support. Though he may have been successful in generating some respect, if not enthusiasm, for himself, he has surely not been able to overcome a widespread impression that his family and entourage are venal. The political system which Diem has constructed in his bitter struggle for control depends largely on relatives and a few trusted advisers. One of his younger brothers, Ngo Dinh Nhu, is the chief political figure in Saigon. Nhu wields power through the Revolutionary Workers Party (Can Lao)—a semi-secret, elite organization which co-opts key members throughout the country; and when he deems it necessary, he also calls upon support from the National Revolutionary Movement (NRM), the official party with mass membership. Both Nhu and his wife are also elected members of the National Assembly—a supposedly democratic body in which, however, no genuine opposition parties are represented.*

Madame Nhu, who is politically active as a leader of the feminist movement and whose father was appointed Ambassador to the United States, lives with her husband in the Presidential Palace, and (since Diem is a bachelor) serves as official hostess and first lady. She has a widespread reputation as a vigorous entrepreneur, able to combine clever business transactions with adroit political manipulation.

Diem has three other brothers, who also wield great power. (A fifth brother was executed by the Viet Minh in 1946, a fact which intensified the President's hatred of the Communists.) The youngest, Ngo Dinh Can, rules Central Viet Nam in autocratic fashion from his headquarters in Hué. A third brother, Ngo Dinh Luyen, serves as Ambassador to Great Britain, the Benelux countries, and several newly independent African nations. The eldest of the family, Ngo Dinh Thuc, is now a Catholic archbishop in Hué, and exercises strong ideological influence on the President. Thuc has instituted an academy at Vinh Long, with five of his priests composing the faculty and with civil servants, army officers, and schoolteachers composing the student body, to spread "Personalism," the official philosophy of the Diem government.†

In placing his family in positions of major influence, Diem is following a time-honored Oriental practice which is plainly

* Housed in Saigon in an opera house built by the French, the National Assembly is the subject of an anecdote which reveals its popular reputation. "When the French were here," the story goes, "a tragedy played once a week. Now there is comedy every day."

† A philosophical moralism with French Catholic roots, Personalism rejects both capitalist and Communist "materialism." It is based on a spiritual conception of man in the community, striving to reconcile the need for collective discipline and social justice with individual liberty.

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more offensive to modernist intellectuals than to the traditionalist peasantry. Nevertheless, the fact that the family regime consists of aristocratic Catholics from the alien Center section does nothing to endear the government to the Southern peasants, and also increases their willingness to believe the widespread rumors of corruption in ruling circles.

On May 13, 1959, the ultimate aim of the Viet Minh government of the North was made clear by the statement of its central committee that the time had come to "struggle heroically and perseveringly to smash the government of President Diem." One of the main gambits used in pursuit of this objective is the argument of the Viet Cong agents that Communism not only best serves the interests of the peasantry but that it represents the wave of the future. In order to make this thesis convincing to the peasants, the Viet Cong has adopted the strategy of trying to produce concrete evidence that the Southern regime is too weak and ineffective to provide proper protection or services for its population.

The moves of the Viet Cong guerillas to produce such evidence have been many and thorough for several years. Village and hamlet chiefs, local police commissioners, youth leaders, members of the security forces—in fact all government functionaries—have been vulnerable to assassination. During 1960, for example, some 4,000 officials were killed as a result of Viet Cong activity. Yet Viet Cong terrorism is discriminating, with victims being carefully selected. Prime targets are unpopular local officials, since their elimination both demonstrates Viet Cong strength and appears to protect the interests of the peasantry. Sometimes all the inhabitants of a village will be assembled at night under Viet Cong orders to witness the execution of such an official, said to be a "traitor" to the "national revolution." Continuously alert to local sentiment, the guerillas develop contacts with disgruntled members of the religious sects and other important village groups in order to mark down additional targets for either death or harassment. The letter to a hamlet official cited below, one of several examined by the author on a research trip in a Southern village in April 1960, shows one method of Viet Cong operation:

Battalion Thong Kiet
Company 256
No. 35/CTQS

Coalition of the Armed Forces of the Religious Sects Against Americans and Diem

To: Tam-Anh, Secretary of My-Thanh B Hamlet
My-Thuan Village, Binh Minh District (Vinh Long Province)

"While the situation is critical, the fighting movement of the people becomes stronger and stronger every day. The Americans and Diem oppress the people without pity. They use dictatorship, one religion, and a one-family system to govern the country. They are entirely isolated from the people, and their regime is declining at its very roots. . . . Their regime is a barbarian and bloody one.

"Based on the above situation, the Revolution and the people do not recognize this regime nor the various reactionary organizations of the Americans and Diem. For this reason, the Revolution and the People have recently taken opposition measures at various places, as well as here in My Thuan that you, undoubtedly, have heard of and seen.

"Since the day the hamlet chief paid for his crime, you have committed many indecent deeds, sometimes secretly and other times openly. Hiding from the people and by-passing the Revolution, you have stubbornly continued to work for the rebels. To be exact, you recently tied two draft evaders and handed them over to the Americans and Diem, sold family declaration forms, and collected money from the people. . . . You collaborate closely with the hamlet officials, carry out plots against the peace by the Americans and Diem, side with landowners in the fixing of rice-land rent, force farmers to pay high rent,

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and tend rented lands for landowners.

"All these actions, which are very detrimental to the Revolution and the People, prove that you may be the future hamlet chief. It would be very dangerous if you did not repent soon.

"We, the commanding staff of Company 256 of Battalion Ly Thuong Kiet wholeheartedly warn you so that you can correct yourself. Resign immediately from your function as secretary and stop collaborating with rebels. If you still stubbornly do so, you will be entirely responsible before the Revolution and the People."

War Zone March 29, 1960
BCH Company 256
—Sealed—

Other Viet Cong tactics designed to demonstrate the weakness of the Diem regime include disruption of administration and retardation of economic development. To this end, the guerillas cut communications, block roads, blast bridges, and plunder rubber plantations. Combined with all these activities is an incessant propaganda campaign. The Viet Cong disseminate thousands of leaflets denouncing the Diem government, some printed crudely under field conditions, others prepared with greater care in the North, in Cambodia, or clandestinely in Southern towns. Political lectures are also given in areas under Communist control, and whispering campaigns are carried on at every opportunity. The main purpose of all this propaganda is to convince the peasants that the Americans have replaced the French as the imperialist power and that Communism (presented in simplistic terms) is the only true fulfillment of the nationalist revolution.

THE VIET CONG guerilla force, whose size is estimated at between 12,000 and 20,000, comes from a variety of sources. Many of those sent from the North are Southerners who fled from their native region in 1954 after the signing of the Geneva Accord. Some work their way south through Laos, infiltrating the mountains of the Haut Plateau region to agitate among the non-Vietnamese mountaineers. A larger number follow the Ho Chi Minh Trail, wandering unchallenged through Cambodia, and slipping with ease into the dense jungle and marshes of the Southern delta areas, past the long frontiers which are impossible to patrol effectively. Still others reach the Southern coastal regions by sailing the South China Sea from Cambodia in boats which are indistinguishable from the fishing junks plying coastal waters.

It is difficult to say exactly what proportion of this guerilla force is actually from the North,* but it is widely believed that the Viet Cong leaders are furnished from there and work under the general direction of Hanoi. Arms, ammunition, and supplies are also sent from the North, though here again it is difficult to estimate what proportion of the total originates from this source. Since Laos has tipped farther into Pathet Lao control and since large quantities of Soviet bloc weapons were shipped to Laos during the hostilities, it seems reasonable to surmise that a new supply of weapons is being carried into South Viet Nam across Laotian and Cambodian borders.

Many of the guerillas come from the Southern peasantry itself. Though most of the Communist forces were removed from the South when the Geneva Accord was signed, a nucleus was left behind to become the core of Viet Cong cadres and to gather new recruits. Moreover, a number of disgruntled adherents of Cao Dai and Hoa Hao have joined the Viet Cong in protest against the Diem government. Other Southern recruits include social misfits and the usual quota of men lured by opportunities for adventure and violence.

But not all Southern members of the Viet Cong are volunteers. In regions where the Viet Cong is in control, participation in guerilla activities amounts to a draft

* U.S. Secretary of Defense McNamara estimates that it is two-thirds.

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call enforced by social pressures and various kinds of sanctions. There is some dragooning. During one period, for instance, the Viet Cong kidnapped people, forced them to engage in subversive activities, and then used their fear of being punished by the government to blackmail them into continuing. What makes this blackmail particularly effective is the fact that no general amnesty policy (such as prevailed in Malaya) has been developed by the government to encourage recruits to abandon their guerilla activities voluntarily.

Ironically, the anti-Viet Cong operations of the government have supplied yet another source of Viet Cong support. Though President Diem has promised severe punishment to any member of his security forces who pillages, rapes, loots, or in any other way acts outside the bounds of military propriety, such measures are difficult to enforce in the climate of anti-guerilla jungle warfare. In addition, when government troops swoop into an area where guerilla agents are reported to be operating, uncommitted and innocent villagers often become targets of the security forces who are unable to distinguish them from the Viet Cong. All this sometimes leads to a resentment so great that joining in Viet Cong activities seems the only way to express it adequately.

But even if they do not actually join in with Viet Cong activity, many peasants—caught between the fear of Communist reprisal and antipathy to the government—are unwilling to cooperate in the effort to flush the guerillas out. And where such cooperation is lacking, the government's task becomes almost impossible.

THE SUCCESS of the Viet Cong guerillas in disrupting normal activity and creating havoc has raised the question both in Washington and in Saigon of initiating reverse activity against the Northern regime of Ho Chi Minh. If unfulfilled expectations contribute to present support of the Viet Cong in the South, it would seem that a greater degree of support should be available if the Diem regime were to agitate in the North.* Expectations there have been even less satisfied than in the South; living conditions are poor, and the grounds are increasing for resentment against totalitarian government policies. The regimented wretchedness of the North Vietnamese masses has been emphasized by Joseph Alsop† in advocating Southern guerilla activity in the North:

> North Viet Nam, in other words, is a ripe target for precisely the kind of underground assault now being made on South Viet Nam—if anyone had the guts to take the risk of sponsoring and supporting this kind of assault. . . .
>
> You cannot permit an enemy unlimited freedom to hit you whenever and wherever he pleases, while never hitting back yourself, without suffering mortal damage in the end.

The problem, however, is not quite one of "guts." Assuming that the Northern population would offer a susceptible base for subversion, the Diem government would still have to find men as willing to endure tremendous hardship and constant peril as the Viet Cong have been. But what would supply their inspiration? The leaders of the guerilla movement in the South have their Communist doctrine to inspire them, and they are further reinforced by the nationalist fervor that originally motivated activity against the French. No comparable inspiration has developed for the Southerners, and it seems highly unlikely that President Diem's "Personalism" could ever provide one.

It is, of course, possible—though by no means certain—that recruits might be found among refugees from the North, especially among the committed Catholics. The desire of those refugees to return to their native region coupled with their anti-

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* Northern refugees often point out that Communism has a greater appeal in the South than in the Center or North, since the South has never known what Viet Minh control means.

† "The Double Standard," New York *Herald Tribune* (April 19, 1961).

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Communism would perhaps provide them with sufficient motivation to lead guerilla operations and recruit new members from the dissatisfied Northern peasantry. It is also conceivable that a Southern propaganda campaign picturing the Chinese, the traditional enemy of the Vietnamese, as the new imperialists would arouse sufficient nationalist sentiment in the North to generate action.

Yet even if enough guerillas could be recruited to carry on subversion in the North, the possible results would still need to be carefully weighed by the South. What might appear to be the greatest hope for success—the instigation of a popular revolution in North Viet Nam—could instead turn out to be a new Hungary, with the Communist Chinese playing the role of the Russians. On the other hand, Southern guerilla activity might be designed to harass the North sufficiently to bring about negotiations whereby each side would agree to cease subversion. Though such success seems unlikely, this possibility appears to lie behind the determination of Diem and his American advisers to carry out guerilla activity in the North.

THE MAIN IMPACT that Viet Cong subversion has had on the South Viet Nam government has been to goad it into enacting tighter controls and repressive measures which further disaffect the peasantry—at a time when the designing of policies that could win popular support is Diem's most urgent job. The bitter challenge of the Communists has combined with the separatist pull of the religious sects to strengthen the centralist tendencies of the regime and to contribute to Diem's belief that power must be wielded by the few he can trust.

The security forces, supplemented by the political and administrative machinery, provide the chief instruments of control. There is an army of 150,000, and the government has announced its intention to add 20,000 more troops following the receipt of additional U.S. funds. The Civil Guard, a quasi-military organization which supplements the army in the provinces, has enlisted over 50,000; the police force, under national control, is some 8,000 strong; and the Sûreté (secret police) is estimated at 7,700 members. In addition, local self-defense units, not including the youth corps receiving military training, number more than 45,000. The ratio of security forces to the total population, therefore, might be calculated at one to forty-three.

Administration is conducted through a highly centralized bureaucracy, strongly controlled by the Presidency. The ministers who head the administrative departments —with the exception of a few close to the President's official family—exercise little independent policy-making function, for their real job is to carry out the instructions of Diem and his inner clique. Governmental programs are framed in Saigon and communicated through the province, the district, and the village. Although the lower echelons may resent the great pressure put on them to execute policies imposed by higher headquarters—policies which may or may not be adapted to peasant needs and desires—they are not encouraged to communicate any opposition or criticism.

The pattern of local administration in rural areas resembles the pattern in enemy-occupied territory during wartime. The posts of province and district chiefs are held primarily by army officers, who are inclined to feel that fighting the Communists, rather than the normal routine of administration, is their primary task. These officials operate in garrison-like quarters surrounded by barbed-wire barricades, and travel into the countryside only under heavy guard.

In some provincial towns citizens are required to display colored balls in front of their lodgings to indicate the number of people present—a control device to aid the police. No villager anywhere may leave his village for more than a day without a visa signed by the chief. There are also

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internment camps (now holding an estimated 25,000) to which anyone suspected of subversive activity may be committed by administrative fiat. Administrators at every echelon also employ informers to gather accounts of the Viet Cong. Thus the intelligence networks, though inefficient, are spread throughout the society.*

A STRIKING illustration of the kind of trouble the government has run into, in trying to deal with subversion in the countryside, is provided by its experience with a program of resettling that segment of the peasantry which inhabits the regions of greatest Viet Cong activity. According to this plan, which was inaugurated early in 1959, certain families were to be regrouped into areas where they could be placed under heavy surveillance. One of the two groups to be moved was known as "Viet Cong families"—those whom local authorities believed to be sympathetic toward the Communists or who, because they had relatives in the North or in the Viet Cong organization in the South, were considered especially vulnerable to Viet Cong persuasion. These "Viet Cong families" were to be concentrated in agglomeration centers, known in Vietnamese as *khi khu*. Other centers, *khi ap*, were to concentrate families thought to be reliable, patriotic, and loyal to the Southern government, but who (because they lived in remote areas) were difficult to protect from the blandishments and threats of the Viet Cong. Both groups, therefore, would be settled in places where neither would be in a position to give aid, comfort, or information to the underground.

The plan at once stirred protest. The designation of "Viet Cong families" depended upon the arbitrary judgment of local officials whose basis for decision was often no more than their own prejudices. The "loyal families," too, felt wronged in being associated with the "Viet Cong families." Further, the plan was conceived in terms of pure military security without economic and social factors being taken into account. But before the plan was widely put into effect, it gave way to the establishment of "agrovilles."

These agrovilles—announced by Diem on July 7, 1959—are settlements, bordering on major roads and arteries of communication, into which a formerly dispersed rural population was to be concentrated. The purpose was to create living areas around which barricades could be constructed, guard posts established, and population movement controlled. In this way, it was presumed, people would be protected from susceptibility to Viet Cong tax collection, information gathering, terrorism, and recruitment.

This program, too, roused protest. It mobilized the peasantry to work, without compensation, on ten-day shifts. Neither food nor transportation was provided, and each worker was required to bring his own work implements. Duty at some of the agrovilles extended into the harvest season, preventing the peasant in some cases from bringing in the crop from his own rice fields. Very few families—as might have been anticipated—wished to leave their traditional homesteads, with their gardens, trees, and surrounding rice fields; and they especially resented being separated from the ancestral tombs beside which they regularly worshiped. The new home sites were barren, without trees to provide shade from the torrid sun, in an area composed of a vast checkerboard of canals crisscrossing square plots of land on which there was only untended grass and a mud foundation for a hut. Few of the farm animals could be moved to the new plots; there was no place to house them. In particular, the water buffaloes, the sturdy draught animals of the monsoon tropics, were not permitted to enter the agrovilles

* An anecdote about the abundant intelligence activities of the government is instructive. The story is told that in the region of Camau, six intelligence networks were paying for information: the army, the Civil Guard, the Sûreté, Can Lao, the province chief, and the district chief. All were receiving their information from one source—a Viet Cong agent.

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because their hooves would damage the new mud roads. Promises that the future would bring the peasants schools, maternity clinics, electricity—city life in the countryside—did not assuage their discontent or their objection to being required to purchase land for which they had no desire.

The activity of the Viet Cong against the agrovilles was vituperative. They ordered those under their persuasion not to cooperate with the government in the implementation of its program. They burned and sacked the sites under construction whenever possible, and threatened government officials responsible for administering the program. The chief of Vinh Long province, in an interview in April of 1960, told of the tremendous pressure he was under from Saigon to complete an agroville in his province. Speeding up the work would be his death warrant, he predicted, since regular trips to the site would make him an easy target for the Viet Cong. Ten days after the interview, he was assassinated, even though he had gone to the agroville accompanied by armed body guards and a heavily fortified jeep.

Two major theories have been put forward to explain the special vigor of the Viet Cong's anti-agroville activity. According to the first theory, the Viet Cong realized that the agrovilles would, when fully operative, succeed in eliminating peasant vulnerability to demands of the underground. The other theory holds that the Communists were, as usual, exploiting peasant bitterness against the government. But in any case, the main result of the agroville experiment has been to stir up further discontent among the peasants, thus increasing their propensity to protest against the Diem government through support of the Viet Cong. Whether this additional resentment is outbalanced by the increased physical security provided by the agrovilles remains open to question. In any case, President Diem is committed to continuing the construction of agrovilles, perhaps with some modifications, and the U.S. government (following the report of a study commission headed by Professor Eugene Staley in the summer of 1961) appears willing to give financial support to the program.

WHAT MAKES the cooperation of the peasantry—even apart from its role in the anti-guerilla struggle—particularly crucial to Diem is the fact that his support among other groups will hinge to a great extent on his success in winning over the peasants. Currently, there is no important segment of Vietnamese society whose strong loyalty the government can claim. Although some 750,000 Catholic refugees from the North provided solid backing for Diem in the years immediately following the Geneva Accord, more recently they have exhibited mounting dissatisfaction with his government. Further, Diem's land reform program and his anti-business bias have not endeared his regime to the business and landowning elites. The bureaucracy, though obedient, is not enthusiastic about Diem either; recent Vietnamese history has taught functionaries to be adaptable but cautious with their political allegiance.* Vietnamese intellectuals are also disgruntled with the present political system. This group, the most articulate of all the classes in emergent societies, has an importance far out of proportion to its number, because it provides the potential leadership. In Viet Nam it is severely critical of the government's narrow base, its nepotism, corruption, and repressive measures.

Another group, the military, judging from the pattern of coups elsewhere in Asia, represents a constant threat to the regime. Although the officer corps in South Viet Nam does not make its attitude toward the regime easily discernible,

* A civil servant who has served since 1939 would by now have had to adjust to French colonial rule, to a Japanese-controlled Vichy regime, to a Bao Dai government dominated by the Japanese, to rule by the Viet Minh, to the postwar French system, and to the government of President Diem.

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there is reason to believe that considerable dissatisfaction exists. The army has a youthful, energetic, progressive cadre of officers who have received Western-style military training, either under French aegis or, more recently, in U. S. service schools. They are strongly nationalist, anti-Communist, and impatient to see their nation develop strength and prestige. But rumors are rampant that promotions are based on personal favoritism, family connections, political affiliation, and membership in the Catholic Church. Additional grounds for dissatisfaction stem from President Diem's policy of staffing important posts with officers personally loyal to him and shifting units by direct communication with them, thus ignoring the normal chain of command and sometimes leaving military commanders wondering what has become of their subordinate units.

The army officers and the intellectuals realize that if the peasants incline farther toward the Viet Minh, the nation may well be lost to the Communists. Fear of this fate was a major factor in the thinking of the few officers who undertook the abortive *coup d'état* of November 1960 in which some of the most dissatisfied intellectuals joined. Though Diem was successful in checking this ill-planned coup, the conditions which brought it about have not changed, and the danger of similar attempts in the future remains.

AN ENCOURAGING aspect of Vietnamese life in recent years has been a steady, if undramatic, amelioration of material living conditions—especially for the peasantry. American aid, covering almost two-thirds of South Viet Nam's current budget expenditures, has contributed significantly to this improvement. New canals, irrigation projects, roads, and communication networks have been developed. Consumer items have become readily available. And the export of rice, the staple ingredient of the Vietnamese diet, has not increased in proportion to the increase in production, suggesting that there has probably been a rise in consumption.

A land reform program favorable to the peasantry was also enacted in 1955. It includes provisions for rent reduction, land tenure security, and transfer, and it limits a landowner to one hundred hectares of rice land, plus up to fifteen hectares for each family ancestral cult under his responsibility.* Still, it is doubtful if the government has earned recognition commensurate with this general achievement, for the expectations of the peasantry during the same period seem to have mounted even higher than its standard of living.

It would seem, then, that guerillas in the countryside will continue to be a serious problem for South Viet Nam in the foreseeable future. Because of the difficulty in preventing constant infiltration through the jungle terrain of the long Cambodian and Laotian frontiers, the task of eliminating the stream of new recruits, equipment, and direction from the North seems almost insuperable. Even in Malaya, where the guerillas did not enjoy these advantages, it took over ten years for 40,000 well-trained, organized, and equipped Commonwealth troops, together with more than 100,000 police and special constables, to win the struggle. For Viet Nam, aggressive and flexible military measures are necessary to eliminate the guerillas, but force alone cannot solve the problem. Whether the right political, economic, and social policies can be found and made effective in time remains one of the most significant open questions of the current world crisis.

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* Curiously, government policy and Viet Cong operations have together brought about the abolition of absentee landlordism. The government's land reform process requires the landowner to sell to the government, after which the occupants of the land make the purchase. The Viet Cong, on the other hand, have forbidden the peasantry to cooperate in this program, and in areas where the Viet Cong are powerful, the peasants do not generally pay rent; indeed, the absentee landlord would risk assassination if he attempted to collect his rents.

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ROBERT ALTER

BOOKS FOR JEWISH CHILDREN

On a June afternoon in 1819—so we are informed in a recent historical biography written for Jewish children—a young man with the unabashedly Semitic name of Alfred Mordecai presented himself for examination as a new cadet at West Point.

> "Mordecai? Yes. Noticed your name on the list. Strange name, Mordecai. More like a Biblical first name. What would it be, Welsh?"
>
> "No, sir, American."
>
> Major Thayer grunted. "Right you are," he exclaimed. "I meant, of course, American of Welsh descent?"
>
> "No, sir, it's a Jewish name."
>
> "Is that so?" Major Thayer did not seem disturbed. "Very good. I wish you luck on your examination."

If the current flurry of Jewish children's books reflects with any accuracy the present educational ideals of American Jewry, one can wonder seriously what that supposedly distinctive cultural group is trying to make of itself. The exchange between Mordecai and the major, as we shall see, strikes the keynote for an important group of recent books for Jewish young people, but the note has a peculiarly hollow ring because in these books so little is sounded either above or below it on the scale.

The most ambitious publishing venture into Jewish juveniles in the past few years is the Covenant Books series, put out by Farrar, Straus and Cudahy in conjunction with the Jewish Publication Society. Covenant Books is in many ways an impressive undertaking deserving special attention. In less than four years it has produced thirteen titles, and many more are projected, so one can assume that commercially the enterprise is proving successful. The books all are presented in an attractive format—well printed, competently illustrated, with handsome and, in some cases even artistically striking, jacket drawings. The literary talent is no less impressive. Many of the writers have published serious fiction or poetry; the list includes a translator of Sartre and Eluard as well as regular contributors to magazines such as COMMENTARY and the *New Yorker*.

With the exception of two Biblical novels by Frieda Clark Hyman, all the Covenant Books are biographies, or rather, biographical novels, intended for readers between the ages of eleven and fifteen. The writing is generally proficient and occasionally shows the mark of literary accomplishment. The narration of battle, for example, in Lloyd Alexander's *August Bondi* artistically compresses rapid action into a staccato series of brief, sharply observed flashes of sensory experience.

> August wheeled to rejoin his company. The butternut figures were racing across the field. Shouts of attacking men mingled

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with the rifle fire. Smoke drifted like a giant curtain and turned faces to blurs. Searing pain suddenly filled his chest and stomach and took his breath away. Another impact threw him from the saddle. . . . The hard ground came up to meet him. Overhead the treetops circled dizzily and the horizon disappeared. The sun turned black.

The Covenant Books, however, are not meant to be simply good books for young readers but good books for young Jewish readers. The general statement of purpose that appears on the jackets of the earlier books describes the series as an "expedition into the realms of Jewish experience" and promises that the books "will stimulate the young reader's interest in his cultural heritage and prove a rewarding spiritual experience." But one glance at the titles offered by the series is enough to make one wonder about the conception of Jewish experience held by the Covenant editors and about the nature of the cultural heritage they would like their young readers to enjoy.

If Jewish experience involves some sense of identification with Jewish history, and if the cultural heritage of the Jews is significantly the product of three thousand years of existence as a people, then the view of both presented by Covenant Books is a drastically foreshortened one. Seven of the thirteen stories take place in America. Two other books choose figures who spend at least some important part of their lives in the Western Hemisphere. Apart from Mrs. Hyman's two novels and Libby Klaperman's biography of Saadia Gaon, the realms of Jewish experience in the Covenant Books are limited to the last three centuries. And of the individuals selected for the biographies, there are only three whose personal achievements are in any sense contributions to a distinctively Jewish cultural tradition. (Worthy of special mention is Sylvia Rothchild's biography of Peretz.)

One of the most important values a child can gain from reading historical fiction, biographical or otherwise, is a vivid sense of the past, of what it looked like and felt like to live way back then, in another time and perhaps in another place. The Covenant Books do convey some sense of what it was like to wander through the bustle of New York's wharves in the 1730's, or to walk along Washington's muddy streets in the early 19th century, or to live in a squatter's hut in pre-Civil War Kansas. But one can learn nothing of how it felt to sit in a Palestinian academy of the law with Rabbi Akiba, under the threat of Roman arms, or to move from royal court to battlefield to literary circle in the medieval Spain of Shmuel Hanagid, or even what it was like to be a penniless young Jew with the improbable ambition of writing Hebrew poetry in the Odessa of Bialik. The heritage in which the Covenant series seeks to interest its youthful readers is quite specifically a heritage for American Jews.

To produce such a heritage where one hardly exists is no easy trick. Jewish history in America really begins only sixty years ago, with the great influx of immigration from Eastern Europe that made the Jews a distinctive and significant group on the American scene. But Covenant Books chooses to begin a full three centuries ago, and what it ends up doing is to present American history with a series of Jews as the principal actors. From the archives of the Jewish Publication Society, from a variety of collections of old letters and yellowed newspapers, the Covenant series manages to conjure up figures to serve as a Jewish Paul Revere, a Jewish John Hancock, and even a Jewish Davey Crockett. The historical material in these books may be for the most part factual, but the composite picture of American history the series suggests is certainly somewhat misleading.

And we are still left with the question of what is distinctively Jewish about the lives of these heroes. The brief dialogue between Alfred Mordecai and the West

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Point major enunciates the general formula for the entire series of books: one's Jewishness consists principally in admitting the fact freely and proudly and in not being prevented from living the life of an exemplary American. While a minimum of meaning is attached to the idea of being a Jew, each of these figures participates in the sort of ritual of affirmation that is presented with paradigmatic clarity in the Covenant biography of Emma Lazarus: "*I am twice blessed,* she thought. *A Jew and an American.* Without being conscious of the gesture, her shoulders straightened and she held her head up high." The writer, whose italics these are, is obviously very much conscious of the gesture, as are most of her colleagues in the Covenant series. To be a Jew, they affirm, is almost identical with being an American; in any case, no possible conflict between the two identities is ever imagined. One can rest assured, moreover, that Americans of other faiths—like Mordecai's major—will invariably greet the self-respecting Jew with at least an open mind. However, given the frequency with which Covenant Books insists on making the compatibility of allegiances its main theme and moral, one suspects that the promoters of the series may in fact be uneasy about the problem of living in the two worlds which they protest too loudly are one.

In any case, many of the authors seem quite uncertain about the Jewishness of their American heroes. (A number of them seem no less uncertain about traditional Jewish culture. There are frequent slips in small factual details: a well-known verse from Samuel I is attributed to the Apocrypha, a Jew recites the "psalms and benedictions" of the psalm-less daily evening service, and so forth.) The general strategy of the Covenant writers is to produce some obvious symbol—a kind of rabbinical stamp—to certify the Jewishness of their thoroughly American figures. August Bondi, for example, is the complete frontiersman. But we do not forget that "the Border Hawk" is also a loyal son of Jewish heritage: "From the heavy belt around his waist swung a new Colt pistol. The old tefillin which he had carried since boyhood were in his saddlebag."

In *Silversmith of Old New York: Myer Myers,* a Covenant writer tries to represent being a Jew as a phenomenon of inner life, but the Jewish religious experience which emerges has a peculiarly Protestant tinge. The Jewish colonial hero of this book repeatedly takes stock of his life, in a manner reminiscent of the 18th-century Dissenters, in order to determine whether God is "with him" or whether God has "deserted" him. But *Myer Myers,* the first of the Covenant Books, is nonetheless an appropriate introduction to the assumption about Judaism that underlies the series as a whole. The role of religion in the life of the American Jew is assumed to be strictly analogous to the role it plays in the life of an American Christian. We go to our synagogues, they to their churches, but mainly we are all good Americans.

AMERICA ITSELF is viewed in a glow of fervent patriotism as a new and unique stage in human history. Before the advent of American democracy, men had been subjected to injustice and oppression. In the new land all this was done away with: its Jews, consequently, could consider themselves to have embarked on a radically new period in their history. The reflections of Louis Fleischner, the protagonist of *Northwest Pioneer,* are typical:

> A dull anger came over him. Perhaps in Europe nobody cared about such matters. People were born either poor or rich, important or unimportant, and that was that. But he was an American. Over there one felt differently about social justice.

It seems hardly an accident that the fourteen titles announced so far by Covenant Books do not include a single Zionist figure. The series, to be sure, is by no means

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anti-Zionist. It views with favor the fact that Israel exists as a haven for those persecuted Jews who are unable to come to America, and it applauds American Jews who give Israel their sympathy and support. But Israel exists on the periphery of the Jewish world; otherwise it might upset the delicate balance of American religious pluralism achieved by the Covenant series which regards the Jews as a group of co-religionists—not as a people.

On the other hand, Covenant Books clearly bears the mark of Jewish educational notions that belong to the era of Uris's *Exodus*. Jews, we are informed in one biography after another, are fighters. This does not mean simply that they are willing to struggle for their ideals or stand up for their rights, but that they are ready to fight with rifle or pistol or fist no matter how great the danger or the physical hardship. As the author of *Aboab: First Rabbi of the Americas* states the case, "They were Jews: they were tough." Consequently, Bar Kochba and Judah Maccabee are invoked in these biographies as models of great Jews with almost the same frequency that they are in certain circles in Israel. Emily Hahn, the author of *Aboab,* goes so far as to have her Amsterdam rabbi use the Book of Maccabees as his text of instruction—in an age when it was unthinkable for a rabbi to teach, or even study, anything from the Apocrypha.

But in Covenant Books one can still be a Jew without being either a practicing member of the faith of Moses or a two-fisted fighter. There are three biographies of non-practicing Jews whose principal achievements are in non-Jewish fields of endeavor: Emma Lazarus, the sculptor Jo Davidson, and Albert Einstein. The conception of Emma Lazarus as an "essentially Jewish" figure is probably defensible; in Einstein's case, it is problematic; in the case of Jo Davidson, it is certainly questionable. But the biographers assume that their subjects made their contributions to the Western world as Jews—almost, because they were Jews. There is a passage in which Einstein, after leaving Germany for the first time, feels that he is at last free but wonders what use he will make of his freedom. His Covenant biographer then editorializes: "Surely to seek after knowledge, to acquire wisdom. Though he had given up the outward forms of Judaism, he could not help obeying, instinctively, its inner principles." But is Einstein's thirst for knowledge really any more Jewish than Newton's or Heisenberg's? For the Covenant series, however, to seek wisdom is a distinctive element of the "Jewish heritage" with which the young reader is invited to become acquainted. In the case of Einstein and Jo Davidson, only two more important values need to be added in order to fill out the realm of Jewish experience. The Jew is also a man who seeks self-realization, not only in developing his unique abilities, but in serving some larger community as well; and, concomitantly, he is a man who has the inevitable Jewish concern for social justice. At this point, Covenant Books has drawn precariously close to the conception of Jewishness offered by the consensus of last April's COMMENTARY symposium. The symposiasts' Marx-Freud-Einstein trinity of great Jews already has one of its members on the list of children's biographies, and while Marx must of course remain taboo, it would not be incongruous for a life of Freud to take its place in the Covenant series.

ANOTHER RECENT ENTRY into the field of Jewish juveniles is Jewish Youth Classics, published by an Orthodox house, Philip Feldheim, Inc. The series deals in "classics"—that is, translations or adaptations for Jewish children of 19th-century books originally written in German. Reading one of the three books that have appeared, I could discover no reason why it should be called a classic other than the fact that it is a century old. I suspect that for the Orthodox habit of mind, even popular books for children must acquire a respectable age to assure their educational

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trustworthiness and their Jewish authenticity.

The Family y Aguilar, the only non-biography of the Feldheim books, is a novel of Marrano life based on a book by Rabbi Marcus Lehmann, cited on the jacket as "a leading figure of 19th-century Orthodoxy in Germany." Two of the three titles in the series are by Rabbi Lehmann. Not having seen the original text of *The Family y Aguilar,* I am not sure how much of the blame for it should be borne by Rabbi Lehmann and how much by his American adapter. At the very least, it is evident that the latter has only the shakiest grip on the English language. But in any case, the imagination that makes itself felt here is neither that of an educator nor of a novelist. At best, the novel is lurid, thriving on such Gothic extravagances as detailed descriptions of Inquisition tortures. More often, it is simply a lifeless, cliché-ridden narrative. People in employ of the Inquisition are invariably "henchmen," the villains insist on hiding behind pillars where they rub their hands "with demonic glee," etc. The plot moves forward through a series of farfetched coincidences, including a life-saving earthquake in the middle of an *auto-da-fé*. The author, drawing on a different theology from that of the Covenant writers, can invoke a simple explanation each time the machinery of his plot begins to creak: "Divine providence moved again."

One expects that Jewish content would be an intrinsic part of a novel about Marranos, but I do not find this to be the case in *The Family y Aguilar*. Of the Covenant Books, at least the two historical novels and the biographies of Saadia and Peretz succeed in making some distinctive Jewish values integral to the adventurous careers of the protagonists. But Rabbi Lehmann's book encounters the same difficulty as the majority of the Covenant series: it turns out to be a tale of intrigue and adventure over which some sort of Jewish flag is punctually waved with considerable animation. At strategic points, for example, we are reminded that the crypto-Judaic head of the Inquisition [*sic*] and his Marrano companion take time off from their perilous counterplotting for daily prayers and a Talmud study session. The author of *The Family y Aguilar* also makes his educational point by sprinkling his narrative liberally with sermonettes; often he has the characters do their own preaching:

> Father, I have always been one of you, a true son of my Jewish people. When I planned this escape I did not only think of you and mother and the others. I also thought of myself, of the glittering emptiness and the shallow deception that are my life. I want to belong wholly to you, to my family, my Torah, my people—my Jewish future. Oh, father, I want to be a Jew again!

It may very well be that Rabbi Lehmann's Marranos were intended to point a moral for the 19th-century German Jewry among whom apostasy was widespread. Presumably the editors of the Feldheim series sense in the masses of assimilated American Jews an analogue to the apostates of the last century, and consequently they feel that the appeal made by *The Family y Aguilar* is appropriate for our own time and place. If so, the analogy seems to me to be a false one. American Jews have not been forced to abandon their distinctive identity, as the Marranos in fact were forced to do and as the German Jews felt they were. Rather, American Jews at worst have in various ways adulterated or denatured their Jewishness and—witness the trend of Covenant Books—have legitimized their new versions and come to think of them as authentic. The Orthodox Jewish Youth Classics, in contrast to the Covenant series, naturally has a maximal conception of the "Jewish heritage." The hope is that the young readers will feel responsible not merely for serving the community but for daily study, prayer three times a day, and precise performance of all the commandments. Judging by *The Family y Aguilar,* however, this appeal is

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clothed in such badly fitting, anachronistic dress that it will hardly be any more effective than the noble generalities of Covenant's I-am-an-American line.

STILL ANOTHER series of biographies for Jewish youngsters has begun to appear during the past three years: the Famous Jews Books published by Vallentine-Mitchell, a London house. A look at the list of names in the titles announced or published by Vallentine-Mitchell is instructive: Moses Montefiore, Herzl, Ben Gurion, Einstein, and Moses Mendelssohn. Again, the foreshortening in historical perspective is worthy of note; thus far, the Vallentine-Mitchell conception of famous Jews goes back less than two hundred years, precisely to the beginning of the Emancipation. In some respects, the British series is moved by a concern similar to that of Covenant Books in demonstrating that one can be a perfectly good Jew and a model citizen of one's native country. The brief list includes a biography of Montefiore, pre-eminently both an Englishman and a Jew; the life of Mendelssohn quotes from his *Jerusalem* as follows: "Adapt yourselves to the manners and the constitution of the country in which you live; but hold fast also to the religion of your fathers! Carry both burdens as well as you can. . . ." In connection with this emphasis, Jacqueline Pinto, the biographer of Mendelssohn, can casually write off Jewish history before the Emancipation as "the mental stagnation of the ghetto."

It is not surprising, on the other hand, that two of the five biographies on the Vallentine-Mitchell list are of Zionist leaders. British Jews may be at least as complacently satisfied with themselves as their American counterparts, but they do not have the same passionate conviction that English freedom has brought Jewry—and mankind—to a radically new point of departure. England is looked upon gratefully, but as the biography of Theodor Herzl indicates, the British Jewish educators feel no compulsion to regard their country with eyes altogether dazzled by the light of patriotism. The Famous Jews series is far from being militantly Zionist, yet its directors apparently feel that the creation of the Jewish state is a major event in the recent history of the Jews and that it should not be relegated to the borders of Jewish experience.

The Vallentine-Mitchell books are competently written, but have little of the imagination and literary aura of Covenant Books. Judging by the vocabulary used, the British writers assume a higher degree of literacy in their young readers. Also they apparently do not feel impelled —as do their American colleagues—to dramatize the biographical material for the youngsters. At their worst, the British lives of famous Jews read more like long encyclopedia listings than exciting biographical narratives.

The ubiquity of the biography in recent publishing projects for Jewish children itself raises a question about educational purposes. Biography no doubt can provide a convenient means of focusing and dramatizing history for young people. And one perfectly legitimate way to approach the unique values of a people or a tradition is through the lives of its great men. But the virtually exclusive emphasis on biography as the way to "get to" Jewish children suggests further implications. Since the varieties of Jewish experience presented in such books start in every case with and from the individual, the reader is led to the inference that being a Jew is basically an individual concern in which one arrives at some strictly personal adjustment both with the Jewish past and with the Jewish community. This individualist—one might say, subjectivist—approach to Judaism may be a justifiable emphasis for some sectors of contemporary Jewish education. However, the predominant use of the biographical form implies something more. Biographies written for young people inevitably stress the notion of self-realization. One begins to get the impression, certainly

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from some of the Covenant Books, that self-realization is the first obligation of a Jew. Judaism may not be opposed to self-realization, but it is a distortion to suggest that it is the supreme Jewish ideal.

ONE WELCOME SIGN of relief from the current surfeit of juvenile biographies is a series of informative books for Jewish children by Azriel Eisenberg, published over the last three years by Abelard-Schuman. Dr. Eisenberg apparently assumes, as generations of Jews before him have assumed, that knowledge in itself can be fascinating. His books actually communicate factual material instead of introducing vaguely conceived "values" into stories intended to entertain. Three of his titles have appeared since 1958: *The Story of the Jewish Calendar, The Great Discovery* (on the Dead Sea Scrolls), and *Voices from the Past* (an account of some of the great archaeological discoveries that have illuminated our understanding of Jewish history). These books have obviously been thoroughly researched; the writing is uniformly literate and reflects a lively sense of narration; the exposition of the subjects is lucid without being overly simplified. In the last analysis, Dr. Eisenberg's factual accounts are more intriguing than any of the exemplars of the Jewish cloak-and-dagger or Jewish cowboy-and-Indian genres.

But what is involved here ultimately is the question of whether we are still prepared to assume that the content of the much talked-about Jewish heritage has some intrinsic appeal. Entertaining children's books that "convey values" may have their place, but the present plethora of them is somewhat disquieting. It is probably not a coincidence that such books are the educational enterprise of a contemporary Jewry whose grand strategy of Jewish life is sugar-coating a diluted pill, whether in youth activities or adult organizations or in the synagogue service itself. It seems to me that if a child is looking for good adventurous reading, he is better off with honest fiction for young people, like the novels of Jules Verne, than he could possibly be with any quasi-entertaining, quasi-educational narrative in the style of *The Family y Aguilar* or even of *August Bondi.* And, on the other hand, when it comes to Jewish education, my personal preference would be to have the children spend their reading time actually learning something Jewish. The Abelard-Schuman series is at least a signpost in the right direction.

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Sidney Hook as Philosopher

HENRY DAVID AIKEN

IN AN AGE of analysis, philosophy like everything else has become so technical that its relevance to the conduct of life is obscured even to professional philosophers themselves. And in an age of anxiety, those who do think about ends are likely to confuse fear and trembling with spiritual depth and messianic hopes with remedial action. In such an age, it has been Sidney Hook's role to remind his colleagues that analysis without vision is a game of words and his fellow citizens that unfocused and untested visions of the good society are irresponsible daydreams that may lure us into new forms of slavery. Hook is, above all, a public philosopher who uses his professional logical and analytical skills as stalking horses. If he has made few contributions to technical philosophy, this is because he has devoted his main energies to the clarification of the large human issues in which our lives have become so hopelessly entangled. His contributions on this level have been great. Indeed, with the exception of Bertrand Russell, no other living English-speaking philosopher has performed with comparable distinction the arduous Socratic role of public gadfly, and none has thereby run such a risk of becoming a public scapegoat.

Let us remind ourselves of how much we owe to Hook. During the 30's, Hook, at some cost to himself, made liberals face up to the intellectual confusions and spiritual evils of sentimental fellow-traveling. In the 40's, it was his essay, "The New Failure of Nerve," and its sequels that showed us how fine is the line between a tragic sense of life and irrationalism, fatalism, and self-betrayal. In the 50's, at the risk of obloquy among his fellow intellectuals, it was Hook who compelled us to re-examine in realistic terms the whole problem of freedom in a world of massive conspiracy, institutionalized falsehood, and systematic confusion of values. For him a public philosophy, whether liberal, conservative, or revolutionary, which mechanically reiterates the cant of its "founding fathers" is not a philosophy but a lore. And *no* lore, including our own, is exempt from criticism. Hook's writings are angular, exigent, abrasive; they wound our sensibilities and outrage our conventional feelings of piety and propriety, and are meant to do so. But the result, if we face it, is nearly always salutary. For the act of reflection which he forces upon us serves, whether we like it or not, to purge us of our sentimentality, our paralyzing fear of the unknown, and our unavowed acceptance of some pseudo-historical fate or prophecy that deprives us of our manhood.

Thus when Hook offers for our reconsideration a gathering of his most important philosophical papers over a period of nearly three decades, it is our duty to view them with a seriousness and a sense of relevance to match his own. The wonderful title which Hook has given them—*The Quest for Being**—seems to me to promise more than he has been able to deliver. Even so, it is in these papers that Hook formulates

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* St. Martin's Press, 254 pp., $6.00.

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the philosophical positions that underlie his thinking about the overwhelming cultural crises in which, for the duration, all of us are implicated. And it is to them that we must turn for an understanding of Hook's own vision of man.

Hook has arranged the essays, without regard to chronological order, in three main groups; the first dealing with problems of ethics, the second with problems of theology and the philosophy of religion, and the third with problems of metaphysics, the theory of knowledge, and, most saliently, the philosophy of philosophy itself. The unity of the essays is methodological. On one level this shows itself in his rationalistic passion for argument, explicitness, and definition. On another, it is manifest in his pragmatic conviction that general ideas are not abstract essences which exist for the sake of contemplation by connoisseurs of ideas, but effectual programs for action whose operative meanings are to be looked for in their experiential consequences. Hook is fond, perhaps too fond, of "isms." But "isms," for him, represent not only abstract positions concerning the nature of being or value, but ways of life, on the acceptance or rejection of which may turn the health or survival of culture. Thus, when he speaks of his own philosophy as a form of "naturalism," we may be sure that he intends by it something more than an idle musement about the orders of existence. Hook's naturalism is a consequence of his commitment to the methods of science as the only vehicle of human knowledge in any sphere. But for him, as for Charles Peirce, the method of science is also a moral discipline which, when taken seriously by the individual person, serves as the primary form of self-control. Hook's hatred of romanticism is, at bottom, the moralist's hatred of sentimental self-indulgence, and we ourselves may perhaps judge less harshly his own scientism if we view it in part as the hypertrophied intellectual and moral earnestness of a man of good will who knows the heavy price in human misery which all of us must pay for ideological confusion.

The earliest essay reprinted in this book, "Materialism and Idealism," was first published in 1934 when the "scientific empiricism" of the logical positivists was nearing its zenith. The most recent, "Modern Knowledge and the Concept of God," was first published in March 1960 in COMMENTARY when the anti-naturalist movement which Hook dubbed "the new failure of nerve" had, as he says, "taken on the proportions of a tidal wave in philosophy, theology, literature, and the philosophy of history." During the intervening years of deepening social and philosophical revolution, the only thing that seems to have remained constant is Hook's own loyalty to the pragmatic or experimental naturalism of his great preceptor, John Dewey. Yet it is impossible for even the most dedicated and determined of men to live through a period of prolonged crisis, in which the future becomes increasingly obscure, without showing signs of strain. In Hook's case this is noticeable in several ways. For one thing, he has become increasingly preoccupied, and not merely as an observer, with theological and metaphysical questions or, as I should prefer to call them, questions of "first philosophy." This, in my opinion, is all to the good, for moral philosophy—and Hook is a moral philosopher *par excellence*—lacks depth and intensity unless supported and clarified by a metaphysics and a theology. There was a tendency in some of Hook's earlier writings to assume that the major battles in the latter spheres had already been won and that thenceforth the primary task was to apply the lessons of his master. Now, as he perceives, *nothing* can be taken for granted, and in the struggle to clarify his own basic commitments, Hook has achieved a philosophical independence which must be something of a shock to old party-line Deweyians for whom scientific humanism amounted to a religion.

THERE ARE other changes in Hook's philosophical attitudes which I find less appealing. In his later papers Hook exhibits a certain hardening of his rationalistic arteries and a corresponding weakening of the experimental and pragmatic veins in his thought. No doubt Hook means to remain an experimentalist, at least within the domain of scientific inquiry. But as a critic and historian of ideas he is much less an experimentalist than formerly. For example, it appeared to the earlier Hook

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less important to debate, in rather set "empirical" terms, the existence of God than to determine the underlying consequential meaning of the idea of God in human experience. Or, in another way, he has become less a stimulating philosopher of religion, concerned to search out the significance of religious experience, and more a rationalistic theologian who knows, or thinks he knows, in advance where, if He exists, we must search for God. But to inquire in a serious way whether there is a God is already to engage in a religious quest whose end, if and when one reaches it, is not a belief in a rather outsized object or cause, but a faith that there is Something worthy of worship whose Existence enlivens and penetrates one's entire being.

Hook now tells us that "To most naturalists in contradistinction to most supernaturalists, the problem is not so much *what* God is as *that* he is," and the only terms on which he is prepared, as a naturalist, even to discuss His existence are those afforded by the scientific conceptions of knowledge and existence. But if Hook is right, this suggests to my mind that the "supernaturalists" take a more deeply experimental and pragmatic attitude toward the problems of religious understanding than the naturalists themselves. There have been supernaturalists, caught in the toils of superstition and magic, for whom the existence of God is no more a problem than it was for Robert Ingersoll. But there have been religious naturalists, such as Spinoza, whose whole problem has been to determine the nature of God's being. Oddly, it seems to me that Hook has placed his own lower-case faith in the philosophy of scientific empiricism in jeopardy by insisting that the only evidences or reasons he is prepared to acknowledge for God's existence are those which the method of science affords. He who is sincere in his search for God must be a radical experimentalist who will accept illumination anywhere at all, whether in the laboratory, in a work of art, in a form of words, or in witnessing an unpremeditated act of kindness. He may even find it in a process of argument, but only if he conceives argument itself as something more than an effort toward scientific proof.

A SIMILAR RIGIDITY is evident in Hook's more recent discussions of metaphysics. Nearly three decades ago, in his illuminating essay on "Materialism and Idealism," Hook made the prescient suggestion that the great 19th-century debate between materialists and idealists (itself, according to him, merely a new-fangled version of the ancient and interminable debate between naturalists and supernaturalists) over the nature of ultimate "reality" is, in part, a debate not about what as a matter of fact exists, but about what is ultimately valuable or significant, the term "valuable" itself being construed as a linguistic device for expressing our own concerns or aspirations either as individuals or as members of a social group. To this extent, Hook maintained, the metaphysical debate is "therewith removed from the realm of epistemological or scientific discussion." (Note here, though, the telltale "or.") From this point of view, what was confused in the metaphysical discussions of the preceding age was the failure of the disputants fully and consistently to perceive the evaluative intention of metaphysics. Now, however, in his attack upon the new metaphysical quest for being, Hook rejects any such approach to the problems of interpretation and appraisal. He asks instead "whether the word 'being' has *any* meaning in a philosophical context." And then, without stopping to examine what context is intended by the writers he considers, he tells us peremptorily that "by a philosophical context I mean any activity which inquires into the logic and the procedures by which knowledge (i.e., scientific knowledge) is built up and described."

Given this principle of interpretation, which is not inappropriate to a discussion of the logico-scientific "ontology" of W. V. Quine, Hook finds Quine's ontological remarks innocent but unilluminating. But when he applies it to the metaphysical and theological discourses of Heidegger and Tillich, he not unnaturally finds that their talk of being is literally nonsensical. Now I am no great admirer of Heidegger's turgid philosophical prose; nor are his anxieties and consolations the same as my own. But in fairness it must be said that Heidegger makes at least one thing quite clear: his ontological questions have nothing to do

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with questions concerning the existence or nonexistence of objects of logical or scientific inquiry. For Heidegger, the metaphysical questioner is "by his very questioning involved in the question." His context is not the "objective" context in which the scientist inquires about the existence of phenomena, but the "subjective" context of care, opposition, refusal, and acceptance. Hook argues that the question originally asked by Schelling and repeated in our time by Heidegger: "Why is there something: why is there not nothing?" is devoid of sense except as a sign of emotional anxiety. Well, a deeper pragmatist than Hook, William James, made sense of it in his essay, "The Sentiment of Rationality." But for James "theoretic" questions of the sort raised by the logician and the scientist are not the only questions which a metaphysician may meaningfully ask. Hook quotes with approval the following statement of Bergson (of all people) about the idea of nothing: "If suppressing a thing consists in replacing it by another, if thinking the absence of one thing is possible by the more or less explicit representation of the presence of some other thing, if, in short, annihilation signifies before anything else substitution, the ideal of an 'annihilation of everything' is as absurd as that of a square circle." But what if by "annihilation" we do not mean "substitution," and what if we are not talking about the suppression or replacement of one *thing* by another, but rather about our own ceasing to be as experiencing subjects? Here it makes no sense to talk of suppression, replacement, and substitution. What replaces *me?* Aristotle, God knows, was no romantic irrationalist, no Hamlet, no Schelling, or Heidegger. Yet when Aristotle said that philosophy begins in "wonder," I think he understood the point of the question, "Why is there something: why is there not nothing?"

From the point of view of science and logic, it is quite true that such a question is senseless, since science is interested only in explanations of behavior. But from the point of view of the subject who views what there is, not as a form of behavior, but as something which he faces, endures, loathes, or renounces, it is, in effect, nothing more than an extreme or limiting *practical* question about the meaning of life itself.

That question, by definition, is not raised, as James pointed out, in tranquility. But to him who raises it, it is not just an objective "sign" of emotional anxiety. To him, it expresses "the philosophic craving in its subtilest and profoundest sense." As James goes on to say, "Absolute existence is absolute mystery, for its relations with the nothing remain unmediated to our understanding." And it is here, just at the moment when we achieve or think we achieve "the peace of rationality," when the unfamiliar, the strange, the wondrous, has been domesticated by our ever-recurrent, healthy-minded sense of fitness, of order, and of business, there breaks out once more that lurking horror that at the very bottom of our being there is simply nothing at all. There are, says James, times when "Ontological emotion so fills the soul that ontological speculation can no longer overlap it and put her girdle of interrogation-marks round existence." "At such moments," he continues, "we feel as if there were something diseased and contemptible, yea vile, in theoretic grubbing and brooding. In the eye of healthy men the philosopher is at best a learned fool." Yet, as James knew, there is in every man a touch of the fool who knows in his heart that the girdle is already broken. And "every generation will produce its Job, its Hamlet, its Faust, or its Sartor Resartus." All this, I repeat, is from a pragmatist, experimentalist, and naturalist in as good standing as Hook. Shall we brush aside his remarks, along with Heidegger's, as meaningless signs of emotional anxiety? If so, then the question which immediately follows is: "How shall they be treated?" But does not this very question itself suggest a relationship between the treated and the treater which denies the possibility of philosophical equality between them?

MY PURPOSE here, however, is not to cite one authoritative pragmatist and experimentalist against another, for in the domain of metaphysics there are no authorities. What interests me rather is the question why Hook's old liberalism as a philosophical critic and historian of ideas has now given way to a rigid, virtually positivistic, rationalism which leads him to

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declare either truistic or nonsensical the entire range of "ontological" inquiries represented by the phrase "the quest for being." We can only guess. I am reminded of Nietzsche's saying, "Look long enough into the well and the well will look back at you." Hook's rationalism, it seems to me, has become a kind of mirror-image of the irrationalism he so detests. In short, Hook claims more for the method of science in philosophy than it can reasonably be expected to deliver, and in so doing he becomes an obscurantist in his own right.

II

CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, there are moments when Hook seems to agree with the underlying philosophical tenor of these remarks. For example, toward the end of his interesting paper, "Scientific Knowledge and Philosophical 'Knowledge,'" in which he denies that there is any philosophical knowledge which is distinct from that of science, he makes the following statement:

> To the extent that philosophy is not a substitute or rival of the sciences, it is a way of looking at the world, a *Lebensphilosophie,* a theory of criticism, ultimately concerned with the better and worse. Philosophy in this sense is wider and more precious than science because in Dewey's words it is "occupied with meaning rather than with truth." It is not a revelation of the physical or metaphysical structure of the universe but of the "predicaments, protests, and aspirations of humanity." It was none other than Dewey who deplored "our lack of imagination in generating leading ideas," and who denied that "the scientifically verifiable" *at any moment* "provides the content of philosophy." Indeed, "as long as we worship science and are afraid of philosophy," he writes, "we shall have no great science." For philosophy is a vision of possibility based on actualities and not determined by them; it reaches beyond fact to values; it exercises "a speculative audacity" in relating values to each other. It must be consistent with the findings of science, but outruns and outreaches *at any given moment* what we strictly know. It is an informed commitment and an intelligent guide to action on behalf of moral ideals. [My italics.]

I have quoted this passage in full because the ambiguities within it, which recur again and again in Hook's later publications, go to the heart of the intellectual and, as I think, the spiritual confusion in Hook's philosophy. For although he denies that "the scientifically verifiable" *at any given moment* "provides the content of philosophy," it is only in the direction of speculations which are in principle scientifically verifiable that he is willing to look for new leading ideas. He speaks of a vision of possibility that reaches beyond fact to values, but, as he makes clear in his essay on "The Ethical Theory of John Dewey," he now views judgments of value as, in principle, scientifically verifiable statements of fact which merely envision possible lines of action which would be desired if the actors were fully aware of their causal conditions and consequences.

It is evident, then, that philosophy, as a form of moral reflection in the widest sense of the term, outruns science only in a particular direction toward which scientific thought itself is tending. And although he sometimes still asserts that "It cannot be stressed too strongly that the question of the connection between philosophical ideas and social practice or human conduct is not a philosophical question but an empirical question," his considered opinion in the one essay that deals at length with the problem of valuation is that "judgments of evaluation about what is good . . . are empirical cognitions, and rational or irrational because tested and controlled by the outcome of experience." It seems never to occur to Hook as a semantical possibility that judgments of value could be tested and controlled by the outcome of experience unless such judgments are regarded as empirical, that is to say scientific, cognitions. In fact, he has become so obsessed by the bugaboo of supernaturalism that he can no longer entertain the logical possibility that utterances which do not express scientific or proto-scientific "cognitions" have any rational meaning at all.

But logical possibilities, I agree, are not moral actualities. It is therefore necessary to consider whether the actual possibilities envisaged by moral reflection are as Hook describes them in his defense of

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Dewey's theory of ethics.* This question is all the more crucial in Hook's case precisely because he maintains that "the philosopher's distinctive function . . . is moral both in its critical and creative modes." For if his conception of that function is confused, the confusion will lie at the very heart of his philosophy, and "the vision of man" which his own *Lebensphilosophie* projects will be hopelessly blurred from the outset.

In order to see the rationale underlying Dewey's (and Hook's) position, it should be borne in mind that since, according to him, there is no form of knowledge except scientific knowledge, we cannot speak of moral cognition unless moral judgments are of a sort that the method of science is competent to verify. It is imperative therefore that Dewey, who is committed to the view that moral reflection is part of the life of reason, not only when concerned with questions of means, but also when concerned with questions of ends—for him, indeed, such questions are inseparable—should find a way of defining such characteristically ethical terms as "desirable" and "ought to be desired" in terms that are, in principle, descriptive of observable states of affairs. As Hook interprets him, then, it is Dewey's theory that when we say that "x is desirable" what we are saying in effect is that "x is [or would be] desired upon reflection about relevant causes and consequences." This definition has the merit of enabling us to distinguish intelligibly between what is desired, simply as such, and what is desirable. Apparently it also enables us to view moral judgments as verifiable exclusively by the procedures employed in the positive sciences.

Nonetheless, such analysis fails; I think, in fact, that it must fail, given the logical jobs of work that moral judgments have to perform. For one thing it leaves on our hands the crucial term "relevant" for which no empirical definition is provided. Nor in my judgment is such a definition possible. For morally relevant causes and effects do not form a natural or empirical kind. Suppose, however, that a definition could be supplied. In that case, we may inquire whether what is desired upon reflection about causes and effects of the sort in question really ought to be desired. But such a query would be impossible if "x is desirable" meant exactly the same thing as "x is desired upon reflection about causes and effects of the sort in question."

BUT THERE IS a more crucial difficulty with Dewey's theory which Hook recognizes and attempts, although unsuccessfully, to meet. One of the salient features of moral judgments about what ought to be desired or done, remarked upon by many moral philosophers since Hume and Kant, is that the moral intention is not merely speculative but practical. That is to say, if I sincerely agree that I ought to perform a certain action, then I am committed thereby to try to perform it. But no ordinary empirical or scientific description or prediction about our behavior, i.e., about what we do or would do under certain conditions, carries with it any such implication. I may agree wholeheartedly that I would upon reflection desire a certain object and yet remain utterly undecided whether to do, or to try to do, anything about it. Hook endeavors to meet the problem by arguing that this "normative" or *de jure* element in moral judgment is supplied not by the judgment, but indirectly by the actual "problematic situation" in which it is asserted. This account of the matter does not suffice. For the normative element belongs, logically, to the very intention of a moral judgment. It cannot, therefore, be assigned to the extra-judgmental, psychological circumstances attending the judgment.

It is plain that Hook's defense of Dewey's ethical theory is owing, in large part, to his fear that *if* such an analysis fails, then the "cognitive meaning" of moral discourse becomes debatable, and the rationality of moral judgments is thereby impugned. But this conclusion is entirely gratuitous if we do not insist, as Hook does, that there is no form of cognition save scientific cognition, and if we do not suppose that the life of reason is nothing but the life of scientific inquiry. No more than Hook or Dewey am I prepared to settle for an emotive theory of ethics according to which moral judgments are merely expressions of emotion and moral disagreements are simply con-

* It should be said in passing that Hook's is the most accurate statement of Dewey's position with which I am acquainted.

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flicts of attitude or feeling which rational procedures are powerless to resolve. I submit, however, that the emotive theory is itself largely a consequence of positivistic and scientistic theories of knowledge and meaning which are obliged to consign to the semantical wastebasket of "emotive meaning" any utterance which the procedures of science are unable to verify. Once this prejudice is overcome, the fundamental support to emotivism disappears, and we are left free to investigate the differential rationality and objectivity of moral thought and judgment without worrying unduly about the dangers of opening the floodgates of intuitionism and supernaturalism. There are better ways of dealing with these latter evils, such as they are.

III

LET US IN CONCLUSION turn to the question of Hook's own moral vision of man and the way of life which he considers desirable. I think we must say, to begin with, that Hook conceives of man, both as he is and as he ought to be, as essentially an intellectual being whose problems are primarily problems of knowledge and whose interests are mainly those of a dedicated scientific inquirer. This may be seen in a variety of ways. For example, consider Hook in his own role as a skeptical "God-seeker." As we have observed, Hook is less interested in the question what God is than in the question whether He is. He tells us that he is "willing to go a long way, to the very ends of reason itself, to track down every last semblance of evidence or argument which promises fulfillment of the quest." But the only reasons or evidences which he is prepared to consider are those which would answer as well to our questions concerning the existence of a physical object. Thus, in effect, the God he seeks is still the God of the rationalistic philosophers: a great cause that can serve as a principle of explanation or, by an obvious metonomy, as a great Explainer. It is significant that in one of his few major dissents from Dewey, Hook gives a negative answer to the question, "Is, then, the religion of Humanism justified in using the term 'God' for its conception of the moral enterprise?" Why? His ostensible reason is that such a view violates ordinary usage, according to which the term "God" designates or is intended to designate "a thing or person." To call our highest ethical commitment "God" would "invite confusion with the old use, and there is, after all, such a thing as the ethics of words."

I find this singularly unconvincing. In the first place, as in the case of his own "proposal" that the term "knowledge" be restricted exclusively to "scientific knowledge," Hook himself has no overly delicate piety toward the ordinary uses or applications of words. And, where the interests of scientific philosophy require it, he is content to burke the confusions that result in the normal course from philosophical redefinitions of old terms. Secondly, Hook constantly applauds Ludwig Feuerbach's thesis that all, or nearly all, religious beliefs are "projections of human needs and care." They are, he says, "either ideal liberations for his [man's] most pressing concerns or, when they express longings, ideal fulfillments." Granted then that many, but by no means all, of the older religions have tied their passion for liberation to a belief in the existence of a friendly supernatural power or creator of the natural world, surely Hook's own Feuerbachian philosophy of religion should provide the warrant for a purified and mature naturalistic or humanistic faith which does not demand that its God should also be an actual thing, endowed with quasi-magical powers. The fact is that Hook is unwilling to identify the ideal fulfillment of the moral enterprise as God because it is not so much the moral life but the institution of science to which he gives his primary allegiance and piety. What he yearns for is not so much an ideal goodness or justice or peace of soul but an ideal truth to which an enraptured scientist could say "Amen."

These intimations are reinforced when we return to the essay on "The New Failure of Nerve" where Hook analyzes the anxieties that have animated the current revival of religion. These he conceives very narrowly as stemming, directly or indirectly, from an irrational loss of faith in the efficacy of science. And his specific for steadying our nerves and restoring our confidence in man himself is the re-establishment of our faith in science, especially in those "areas of social

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life *in which the rationale of the scientific method has not been employed.*" (Italics in text.) But suppose that the rationale of the scientific method were employed in every domain where Hook would apply it. Suppose, in short, that by an application of scientific procedures we gradually overcome the evils of poverty, unemployment, maldistribution of raw materials, and the terrible impact of scientific technology itself. Would this also remove our despair of man himself, his cruelty, his bestiality, his self-hatred, and his forlornness as a morally responsible being? Moreover, how can the rationale of the scientific method, as such, serve to make men aware of an obligation to reduce the evils which could be dealt with scientifically? It is one thing to know how to provide a more equitable distribution of raw materials; it is another to believe that such a redistribution really ought to exist. Here, it seems to me, Hook's theory of ethics has blinded him to the very nature of the problem, which is not a problem of knowledge, in the scientific sense, but a problem of conscience and of conduct. The despair of man in our time, I submit, is not so much a despair of his ignorance as a despair of his wickedness, his inhumanity, his passion for self-destruction.

THERE IS, HOWEVER, another phase of Hook's defense of what may be called "the scientific way of life" which deserves consideration. Elsewhere Hook has argued, imaginatively and with great force, that the rationale of science provides a genuine analogue for the rationale of the democratic process. According to him, a truly democratic society is, in effect, a society of responsible and reasonable co-workers, all of whom acknowledge a commitment to the same impersonal, objective procedures for determining public policy and each of whom, correspondingly, enjoys an equal right to a rational hearing about the policies that are to be adopted. In such a society, each person counts for one and none for more than one. And within the limits imposed by the democratic process or method each is at liberty to say and to do what he thinks right. In other words, the institution of science, imaginatively conceived, serves for Hook, as the state served for Hegel, as a kind of paradigm of the good society itself. And it is for this reason, I take it, that he regards the scientific establishment as the exemplary institution.

There is, I think, much force in this suggestion, and my inadequate summary does not do it justice. Yet even if we regard democracy, in its best and deepest sense, as answering to all of man's spiritual as well as material needs, it seems to me that there remains a whole aspect of the democratic tradition to which Hook's approach gives inadequate expression. This is represented, in one form, by the 18th-century ideal of fraternity. We are not, I think, content to be free and equal co-workers toward an impersonal common good, ministered to by a just but equally impersonal methodology. We crave also a kind of personal identification with one another as individuals who share a destiny and an experience which is beyond the reach of any institution or method to provide. Perhaps we ask too much, but we may as well recognize the difference between brotherhood and citizenship, between personal identity and membership in any organization. Conceptually, what I am referring to is, on one level, what Aristotle called "friendship." On another, it is the idea of a non-institutionalized peoplehood such as is represented to the Jew, at his best and at its best, by the word "Israel." (I am not, of course, talking about the State of Israel.) Intrinsically, such an ideal has no more to do with the scientific method than it has to do with theological beliefs, political affiliations, or ritual observances, though any or all of these may help to "implement" it. But it is the existence of this sense of fraternity, which democracy at *its* best envisages, that can reduce the unnerving sense of isolation and forsakenness which is the overwhelming spiritual disease of modern life, not only in totalitarian societies, but also in "free" and "democratic" societies like our own. It is just here, I suspect, where we reach the whole point and meaning of "personal" religion. And it is the loss of this which so unnerves us. What deepens our despair, moreover, is our recognition that no creed, no doctrine, no traditional deity, can supply our want. For here is a problem of creation, such as the Author of Genesis perceived when He pronounced the words, "Let there be light."

But there is missing also from Hook's

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vision of man any acknowledged place for that passion for beauty, in life as well as in art, which is so powerfully projected in Dewey's masterwork, *Art as Experience*. (I suspect, however, that I am simply making the same point in another way. For, as Plato said, the beautiful is merely the visible form of the good.) In fact, the most salient difference between Hook and Dewey, as moralists, is that for Dewey, unlike Hook, the climax and fulfillment of all satisfactory activity or experience is essentially like that encountered in our major engagements with great works of art. What is involved in the experience of art, as in the experience of love and being loved, is a "having" and a "being" as well as a "cognizing" or a perception of truth. In the penultimate paragraph of Hook's title essay—with its give-away, deflationary title, "The Quest for 'Being' "—Hook quotes approvingly the following magnificent statement of his master: "Barely to note and register that contingency is a trait of natural events has nothing to do with wisdom. The detection and definition of nature's end is in itself barren. But the *undergoing* that actually goes on in the light of this discovery brings one close to supreme issues: life and death." "This," says Hook, "is not romantic existentialism but scientifically grounded *Lebensphilosophie*." I agree that this is not romantic existentialism, for it is not an "ism" at all. But the man who wrote it knew what the quest for being is all about. And I cannot believe that the man who quotes it does not, in his heart of hearts, know so too. For quotation is also, on occasion, a form of commitment, which, as we ponder it, may tell us what and where we are.

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OBSERVATIONS

CHAGALL'S WINDOWS

Edouard Roditi

THE TWELVE stained-glass windows designed by Marc Chagall for the synagogue of the Hadassah Medical Center at the Hebrew University are being dedicated this month in their permanent setting in Jerusalem. The windows depict what might be called a set of "heraldic" emblems for each of the original Twelve Tribes of Israel. In New York City, during the seven weeks from mid-November to early January, 175,000 visitors came to the Museum of Modern Art to view Chagall's works as monuments of devotional art. When I visited the museum on the last day of the show, the queue stretched half a block long, on a cold winter afternoon. Inside, a system of traffic control kept the admiring crowds moving. It was a record-breaking attendance: not even the museum's famous Picasso show had drawn quite such numbers. (Previously, in Paris, the Chagall windows had been viewed by tens of thousands of visitors; and some 20 million people have also seen them reproduced in *Life* magazine, *Paris Match,* and other popular periodicals.) To be sure, in the atmosphere of the moving, orderly crowd in the Museum of Modern Art, one had very little chance to respond to the contemporary splendor of Chagall's windows, or meditate over their meanings.

An ancient Cabbalistic belief, revived in our time in one of the writings of Agnon, affirms that the prayers of Israel rise to the gates of heaven which are twelve—each corresponding to one of the Twelve Tribes—and reach God according to the original tribe of the worshiper. Agnon then suggests that today, as a result of intermarriage, none of us belongs any longer to any one tribe, but that the twelve gates still exist and sort our prayers out according to our way or ritual of praying. Chagall's windows represent these gates through which the prayers of those who worship in Jerusalem in the Hadassah synagogue will have access to heaven.

I had occasion, a couple of years ago, to discuss with Chagall, in his home in Vence on the French Riviera, the whole problem of figurative Jewish devotional art. He had just completed his assignment for Metz Cathedral, which of course posed for him no such problems. He was then still hesitant, it seemed, about the choice of a theme for the Hadassah windows, for he was anxious to avoid offending the more orthodox Jews. We recalled the themes once used by the anonymous artists who decorated the walls, for instance, of the Dura Europos synagogue, in a relatively liberal period of Jewish artistic tradition. And we discussed the late Ernest Namenyi's very ingenious interpretation of the problem, contained in a French booklet on Jewish art which has only recently been published in an American edition.* Namenyi points out that the authorized themes drawn from Biblical tradition seem to have been limited almost exclusively to the sacrifice of Isaac, Solomon seated in judgment on his throne, Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones being brought back to life, and the story of Esther. These have reappeared in orthodox Jewish devotional art in all lands and periods that tolerated figurative representation. We find them in the murals and mosaics of the Greco-Roman period, in the illuminated manuscripts of medieval Spain, France, Italy, and Germany, and much later in the figurative Kashan and Meshed carpets of some Persian synagogues.

For his windows, however, Chagall finally decided upon emblematic representation rather than illustration of Biblical episodes. Yet his choice of emblems of the Twelve Tribes relies on just as ancient a tradition—a tradition also tolerated even in periods of relatively strict interpretation of the rabbinical veto on representational art.

Maimonides wrote that he was forced to

* *The Essence of Jewish Art* (Thomas Yoseloff, 92 pp., $2.95).

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close his eyes whenever he worshiped in the Cordova synagogue, to avoid being distracted from his prayer by the designs of the tapestries adorning the walls. A strict disciple of Maimonides might find Chagall's twelve windows equally distracting. But we remain free to close our eyes as soon as the devotional art before us has achieved, by the sublimity of its themes, its anagogical purpose of leading us to prayer.

The worshipers in the Hadassah synagogue in Jerusalem will surely find Chagall's windows gorgeous and solemn, and even sublime. The critic or art historian who thinks of Chagall's best and most original work as being that which he produced in Paris, Moscow, and Berlin between 1910 and 1930, will, on the other hand, perhaps see the windows as the fruit of one of the artist's more conventional periods, not quite in keeping with his great particular genius, which is of a somewhat pastoral and often clownish nature.

The very medium of stained glass has suffered in the past couple of centuries a kind of sea-change, in terms of technique and aesthetics, that might justify our now making new demands on it, different from those that we make when we contemplate, for instance, the rose-windows of Chartres. The actual pieces of glass that are used in our age are generally much larger, the composition of modern windows bolder in design and less complex in detail, their lead settings less intricate. The general effect of such a modern stained-glass window is that of a mysteriously luminous mural painting executed on a large scale rather than of a translucently hieratic Byzantine mosaic or a gigantic jewel composed of innumerable stones which have been patiently assembled and set. Much of the iconographic detail of a Chartres rose-window is not immediately apparent to us when we contemplate the whole in dazzled delight, but when we look at one of Chagall's windows, we see at once the emblematic figures and Hebrew texts, even if we fail to interpret or read them.

These iconographic details and Hebrew texts were suggested to Chagall by readings of passages in the Bible where Israel (Jacob) blesses his sons and the tribes destined to be descended from them, assigning to each a symbol that has remained a kind of heraldic device. (For example, Naphtali is a "fleet hind," Joseph is "a fruitful bough by a spring," and so on.) Chagall's treatment of these devices is by and large more intentionally traditional than any of his other work, except some of his etched illustrations to the Bible. His stained-glass technique, however, is very personal, in fact novel. Compared to other famous examples of work achieved in this medium by modern masters, Chagall's windows are far richer in color and, thanks to his own finishing and etching of the glass, also in texture. By comparison, the windows of the Matisse chapel in Vence—Chagall lives scarcely a hundred yards away from it, on the Avenue Henri Matisse—would seem pale and technically oversimplified, as indeed would Léger's windows in Audincourt too. The modest windows of the Braque chapel near Dieppe could not stand comparison, nor the Manessier windows for the crypt of the Münster church in Essen. Only the Rouault windows in Assy, though much simpler in technique and less rich in color, can be said to have the same uplifting effect as Chagall's. Ever since Burne-Jones and the English Pre-Raphaelites, great painters have been tempted to revive this almost forgotten art of composition in stained glass. Only Chagall can be said to have triumphed, though achieving an entirely different quality from that of the master craftsmen of Reims and Chartres.

HALF A DOZEN American Jewish communities have now asked Chagall to design windows, mosaics, or murals for their synagogues, offering him sometimes fantastic sums. But the artist is no longer in the prime of his life and hesitates to accept commissions which might entail much travel and physical effort. During the war years, when Chagall was living as a refugee in relatively modest circumstances on New York's Riverside Drive, there were no dazzling offers made to him, much as he might then have appreciated them. If Chagall is at times ironic on the subject of his recent American successes, it is no wonder. Has he not been acclaimed as the greatest living artist, in recent years, in West Germany too?

In truth, Chagall now thinks of his stay in America much as other former refugees remember the war years that they spent in safety in hotel rooms in Cuba or in Lisbon. His adoptive home is France, and he was

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anxious to give it some major artistic monument of a truly public character, which he feels that he achieved in the Cathedral of Metz. For Israel, his ideal home in a way, he wanted to do something similar—the Hadassah windows. His last ambition, still secret, would be to return to Russia, the home of his boyhood and youth, and at least restore there the somewhat damaged decorative panels that he painted, before 1920, for Moscow's Jewish Art Theater; he might also wish to undertake some major project for his native Vitebsk. Russia, France, and Israel alone have real personal meaning in Chagall's memory. The rest of the world, for him, has always been exile.

WERE THE Vitebsk-born Jews who now live in the Western world to foregather in one spot, Marc Chagall would surely be the most famous among them, probably the richest too. This is not to say that the Vitebsk *Landsmannschaft* has taken any special care (as the Czernowitz Jews have in the case of the sculptor Reder) to promote its artists. However famous, the Vitebsk-born sculptor Ossip Zadkine has received little help from his countrymen, and the painter Zarfin, though the son of a once prosperous Vitebsk merchant, still lives in obscurity in Paris. Chagall's success has been a kind of Yiddish Horatio Alger story.

The somewhat eccentric son of a poor warehouseman who supported his large family meagerly enough by handling heavy barrels of salt herrings in a ghetto grocery, Chagall chose, of all catastrophic things, to become an artist. He escaped, miraculously enough, to St. Petersburg, where he was befriended by Leon Bakst, the best-known artist among Czarist Russia's more privileged assimilated Jews. Soon Chagall went on to Paris with a scholarship granted him by Vinaver, the prominent politically liberal Jewish lawyer of the Czarist capital.

After a couple of difficult but still happy years in Paris, Chagall was accepted by Apollinaire among the Cubists and held, in 1914, in Berlin, a phenomenally successful one-man show, after which he returned in triumph to Vitebsk to claim his bride, Bella, the daughter of a local Jewish magnate who some years earlier had contemptuously refused Marc as a prospective son-in-law.

The outbreak of war prevented Chagall, with his bride, from returning immediately to Paris. But all of Russia's Jewish art patrons began to buy his works. The nucleus of their collections generally consisted of works of Chagall and his friends and associates in a new Jewish art movement that already included, among other painters, Issachar Ryback, Nathan Altman, and Eliezer Lissitzky, later known, when he became a Constructivist, as El Lissitzky. Nor was Chagall the most indisputably Jewish of these artists. His clowning, for instance, remained in many respects typically Russian, in fact closely allied to that of the purely Ukrainian painter David Burliuk, with whom Chagall shares moreover a very Russian kind of almost pastoral lyricism, often akin to that of Gogol's *Mirgorod* stories. Chagall's success continued after the Revolution broke out. He was for a while Commissar of Fine Arts in the province of Vitebsk. But in 1922 he managed to emigrate to Berlin, where he was at once acclaimed as a major artist; then to Paris, where he has obtained due recognition ever since.

It was during the years of the Nazi occupation that Chagall left France to emigrate to America, returning, however, to postwar Paris. Several years after the death of his first wife, he married his present wife, of the once fabulously rich Brodsky family of Kiev. In Sholem Aleichem's *Tevya the Milkman,* the legendary Brodsky fortune is often mentioned. Symbolically speaking, it was now as if Chagall, whose father might have been a second Tevya, had married Brodsky's daughter. Chagall had been born and bred in the world of Sholem Aleichem, and many of the riddles in his earlier and best paintings can be interpreted only in terms of Yiddish jokes, anecdotes, proverbs, and turns of phrase such as Sholem Aleichem had collected and published in his writings. Chagall remains in a way a kind of Sholem Aleichem figure, an eternal innocent, a Jewish *"jongleur de Notre Dame,"* whose windows for the Hadassah synagogue, aside from their artistry, remain an appropriate climax in a career that has been full of surprises.

EDOUARD RODITI *is an American poet and art historian who lives in Paris. His* Dialogues on Art, *recently published in New York by Horizon Press, includes long interviews with Chagall, Kokoschka, Miro, and Henry Moore.*

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CONTROVERSY

Foreign Policy & the American Mind

WILLIAM APPLEMAN WILLIAMS

ROBERT A. NISBET

WILLIAM APPLEMAN WILLIAMS—*professor of history at the University of Wisconsin and the author, most recently, of* The Contours of American History—*here comments on* ROBERT A. NISBET'S *"Foreign Policy & the American Mind," which appeared in our September 1961 issue. In that article, Mr. Nisbet was critical of the moralism and ideological fervor which he believes to have interfered with the proper conduct of American foreign policy in recent years, and he expressed the wish that we might return to the classical diplomacy of the 18th and 19th centuries. Mr. Nisbet is vice-chancellor of the University of California.*

William Appleman Williams:

Robert A. Nisbet's essay invites comment because it creates a promising intellectual tension that unhappily is never resolved. His judgment that our troubles result from "some major difficulties of perspective" is precisely on target. The issue *does* go deep: right down, indeed, to the very way we make sense out of ourselves and the world. And when he goes on to define two crucial symptoms of our distorted outlook as a loss of a sense of limits, and a propensity to externalize evil, he puts us seriously in his debt.

But it is essential to account for those weaknesses—to get to the causes behind the symptoms—if the remedies are to be relevant and effective. And Mr. Nisbet fails to offer either a rigorous diagnosis of, or an adequate prescription for, altering the point of view that creates extremism and "futopianism." Hence for the reader the tension and the disappointment.

Mr. Nisbet does of course make some keen observations. His warning about the effects of the containment policy upon the United States is particularly shrewd and timely. It implicitly (and perhaps unintentionally) raises a question that has been neglected too long: whether or not, on balance, containment has benefited the Soviet Union as much or more than it has helped the United States.

On the other hand, Mr. Nisbet wanders rather far from his avowed confrontation with the central issue of warped perspectives. A good part of that meandering results from his nostalgia for what the self-styled realists imagine to have been the diplomatic Garden of Eden. He walks with those "wishing for a return" to the "classical diplomacy of the 18th and 19th centuries. . . . The diplomacy of professionals operating in a finite world. . . [with a] sense of limits."

Only the facts mar that idyllic vision. Those ostensibly restrained diplomats wiped out French holdings in the Western hemisphere, erased Spain from the New World, unified Central Europe by means of a war with a neighbor, and took over most of Africa and large parts of Asia. The Americans practiced self-discipline by destroying Indian society, by relieving Mexico of all its property north of the Rio Grande, and by then moving out into the adjacent oceans. It is, after all, necessary to consider the results of that diplomacy as well as the rhetoric of its protagonists and their admirers.

In their emphasis on and concern with power per se, these modern realists are in reality close emotional and intellectual kin-

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folk to the old romantics. Thus Mr. Nisbet argues that the emerging nations can only be understood in terms of their "vision of power" and the "deep compulsion to absolute power" that drives their leaders. He caps this interpretation with the asseveration that Castro would be pro-fascist if Hitlerite Germany was the chief non-American power in the world.

Both particularly and in general, this is a serious error. Specifically, Castro did lead a true social revolution, and did indicate from the start a persistent disposition to effect a *modus vivendi* with the United States. And he does have a *Weltanschauung* that would ultimately have prompted him to turn to the Soviet Union in the 1920's or the 1930's just as it has in the present. In the broad sense, Mr. Nisbet's realism risks distorting the world as badly as the outlook he criticizes. For the great majority of leaders in the new nations do have quite clear ideas of the good society; ideas that do in practice guide and limit their actions. And to ignore or discount this is to ask for serious trouble.

THE SAME EMPHASIS on power prompts Mr. Nisbet to discount drastically the significance of Marxism (or socialism in general, one gathers) either in evaluating the appeal of Russia, or in understanding changes of substance and style in the Soviet Union. To be a mite facetious, a more accurate estimate might be put in this fashion: despite their best efforts, the Bolsheviks failed to destroy the image of socialism as a better way of life. It still provides an ideological and a moral focus for many people caught up in the revolution of rising expectations.

And the conflicts over emphasis and priorities that rage within Marxist thought continue to play a significant role in the changes in Russia and other Communist states. To interpret the struggle between Tito and Stalin (or even that between Gomulka and Khrushchev) as merely one of conflicting nationalisms is seriously to oversimplify the nature of history as well as of Marxism. Here Mr. Nisbet comes very close to externalizing evil in the way that he criticizes. He says flatly that "Communism, wherever it is, and however isolated it may be, is an evil." But this denies the reality of change generated within a given *Weltanschauung*. And that is precisely what has been happening within every Communist country. Drawing distinctions between Communisms, and within them, is very apt to be the key to influencing the world in the direction we desire.

Mr. Nisbet's nostalgia for an imagined past also bears directly on his fondness for quoting George Frost Kennan. That is all very well, but he overlooks an aspect of Kennan that is vital to his own thesis. And regardless of my own disagreements with Kennan as a historian, or my strong opposition to his clear and active elitism, I think it is very important that Kennan be given credit for the right thing. For what he has done is much more difficult—and much more important for America's welfare in the present crisis—than merely having been right all the time.

Mr. Nisbet argues that containment was turned into a dreadful distortion of itself largely through the efforts of John Foster Dulles. In evaluating this thesis, one must first remember that Kennan's "X" article was at the very least a second revised draft of a long official dispatch he had filed during the Iranian crisis of 1947. Given Kennan's command of the language, and his sense of responsibility, that means it is fair to take his words, images, and metaphors as if he did in fact know and mean what he said. When that is done, it seems clear that Kennan's initial statement of containment carried the seeds of all that Mr. Nisbet complains of while taking Kennan as his guide.

Consider first the substance and tone of Kennan's description of the Soviets. They are "visionary and impractical" men embarked upon "the quest for absolute power," and are "not likely to be swayed by any normal logic." Furthermore, "they themselves had provoked" their troubles by "their own aggressive intransigence." And observe particularly the images in his key descriptive passage: their government "moves inexorably along the prescribed path, like a persistent toy automobile wound up and headed in a given direction, stopping only when it meets with some unanswerable force." Thus nothing but "facts of unchallengeable validity" can have an effect.

In describing those facts, Kennan repeatedly uses the word *force*. American

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policy should be based on "the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force"; a "policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point." Nor does Kennan doubt that America is powerful enough: the "decision will really fall in large measure in this country itself." It "has it in its power . . . to force upon the Kremlin a far greater degree of moderation and circumspection . . . and in this way to promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the break-up or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power."

This is not the advice of one who has any real sense of limits on American power. But it certainly is the analysis of one who externalizes a great deal of the world's evil in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of Americans read or paraphrased the article in that manner at the time. And while John Foster Dulles often indulged his flair for unrestrained rhetoric and further dramatized that estimate of the problem, it is undeniable that Dean Acheson and a whole host of American leaders took Kennan's article at its face value and in its obvious meaning. And most certainly the Kremlin did. It is stretching credibility to argue that Kennan used the word *force* in the way that he did while meaning something else.

But Kennan deserves great credit for changing that 1947 estimate of the problem into the more restrained and balanced interpretation that he began to offer some five years later. Kennan did in fact exactly what Mr. Nisbet wants each of us to do. And in missing or minimizing that shift, Mr. Nisbet overlooks a method that would help him achieve his own objectives. For while the Russian fabrication of nuclear weapons no doubt contributed to Kennan's change, it also seems clear that Kennan was influenced by his study of American history. And that way of learning may be the most promising —as well as the safest—way of dealing with the "major difficulties of perspective" which so upset Mr. Nisbet.

FOR HIS PART, Mr. Nisbet accounts for our loss of a sense of limits and our externalizing of evil by a passing reference to the Gospel of Progress, and by Kennan's argument that our own propaganda has seduced us. I would suggest instead that we will go much further along the way to self-knowledge if we follow the clues offered by the image and the cliché of the frontier. The frontier is the idiom and the reality of American history at least down to 1950–52. But it is time to stop treating Frederick Jackson Turner as a historian (let alone as a social scientist!). He was a poet. A poet blotched by his education, to be sure, but nevertheless a poet. He saw the central role of the American frontier and in a moment of profound insight called it "a gate of escape."

Our national enemies have from the outset been those who blocked that gate of escape. The Puritans, let us remember, ran away from a showdown fight at home. From that beginning, Great Britain became the externalized evil until the North defeated the pro-British South. Along the way, we began to externalize evil in the image of the Indians and the Mexicans. Finally, at the turn of the century, it was the Spanish. Then we shifted to the Germans and the Japanese, and still later to the Russians and the Chinese. Several of those nations ultimately became evil even though they had earlier been admitted as fellow knights—or at least squires—in the Righteous Order of the Open Door.

This definition of the frontier as both a gate of escape from evil and an open door to prosperity and democracy is much more central to America's difficulties of perspective than the Gospel of Progress. For one thing, the Founding Fathers were fundamentally pessimists. They viewed their work as the labor of holding the line for as long as possible, not as cranking up a machine for perpetual progress. Furthermore, most of them confronted very bluntly the exact dilemma posed and skirted by Mr. Nisbet. However they phrased it, they took hold of this central issue: how, without expansion, could America sustain democracy and prosperity?

In the end, of course, they opted for expansion via the frontier. But not without anguish and trepidation. Along with George Washington, James Madison, and a good many others, John Quincy Adams clearly recognized the inherent dangers of that solution. The frontier-expansionist outlook externalized evil because it externalized good. For if prosperity and democracy are

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tied causally to expansion, then those who stand athwart that frontier are by definition and in practice evil.

Adams realized that it was not war propaganda that caused the externalizing of evil. The propaganda, and the moralism, stemmed from the antecedent definition of good and evil in terms of the frontier process. Adams was deeply concerned as early as 1823 about the moralism that was even then beginning to provide a gloss for more mundane motives, and to operate in turn as an independent engine of wholesale and unrestrained expansionism and combativeness. If America continued its propensity to go "abroad in search of monsters to destroy," he warned, then it would lose its own soul even if it became "the dictatress of the world." And as one reflects upon that axiom, it is quite to the point to notice that Kennan did *not* quote it in his famous "X" article. He turned to that wisdom only after the Russians developed their bombs.

This propensity to abandon limits and externalize evil was clearly encouraged by always winning the frontier conflicts. If we are unique, and in this sense we may be, it is only because we have never lost. Only the South has been defeated, and that did not count because it was already defined as evil and hence deserved to be beaten down into unconditional surrender. A people who can do that to their own blood kin can and will do it to anyone—as Hiroshima and Nagasaki serve to remind us.

Only the Russians and the poor countries have been able to stop (and even reverse) the frontier process. Small wonder, then, at our frustration, impatience, and propensity to respond with extremist solutions. We lack the very thing that Mr. Nisbet mentions in his discussion of the poor countries—a sense of self-commitment. America's "major difficulties of perspective" stem directly from its lack of self-commitment. It defines itself in terms of others, and hence can know no peace until the others have become like itself.

This kind of internationalism, which is today the article of faith with most liberals and conservatives, is the historical as well as the logical product of the frontier-expansionist outlook. It has caused grave practical problems and has created a dangerous intellectual and semantic legacy. For the internationalists have manufactured an almost wholly negative image of any alternative to their outlook. To speak directly and candidly of self-commitment and self-containment for the United States is to ask to be damned and dismissed as an isolationist who entertains fantasies of a Fortress America. The discussion and debate so desperately needed is thus choked off at birth, and the internationalists continue with their tragic work of sustaining a situation in which the United States is literally becoming a fortress.

SELF-COMMITMENT and self-containment are neither isolationism nor narrow, hysterical nationalism. They are the manifestations of a mature sense of identity. Only that kind of self-identity makes it possible to deal with others in a realistic and creative manner. One must know his own self before one can be true to anyone. Like John Quincy Adams more than a century earlier, Senator William J. Fulbright understood this in the recent Cuban crisis: to be an American should mean that one simply does not seriously entertain certain projects—let alone actually undertake them. But even Fulbright often appears confused by the false equation that the internationalists have created between isolationism and self-containment. He seems to interpret self-containment as the policy of despair whereas it is in truth the policy of confidence, and of a belief in America's creativity.

Perhaps John Donne, one of the saints of American internationalism, offers a way of dramatizing the need to alter our fundamental outlook if we are to resolve those "major difficulties of perspective." One of Donne's striking lines—"No man is an island, entire of itself"—became in the 1930's and 1940's the Hail Mary of the internationalists. (One sometimes feels, indeed, that a good many of those who call themselves realists pilfered their conception of realism, as well as Donne's line of poetry, from the writings of Ernest Hemingway.)

Now that use of Donne's quotation is in some ways legitimate as well as effective propaganda. Specifically, Donne was an Elizabethan who argued that expansion would sweep the streets clean of unemployed. And in the broader sense, of course, Donne's aphorism is true: no individual can become a fully human being, let alone can he de-

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velop his creative powers, in literal isolation.

But Donne also realized that one does not cease to be an island merely by expanding himself: that only makes a bigger island. He put that insight into a bit of poetry every whit as moving and as relevant to foreign affairs as the one quoted by the internationalists. Apparently they never read it. Or, perhaps, they missed its point: "Be thine own palace, or the world's thy jail."

In neglecting this part of Donne, the United States has become little more than a bigger island which now finds the world its jail. That is the source of those "major difficulties of perspective" which rightly trouble Mr. Nisbet. But the only realism that can resolve those difficulties is not the kind that deals with symptoms, it is instead the kind that boldly admits that the traditional frontier-expansionist outlook has become a fantasy completely out of contact with reality. Only by giving up that chimera can we proceed to establish a new perspective grounded in the real world.

* * *

Robert A. Nisbet:

I am grateful to Mr. Williams for his thoughtful and stimulating comments. Even though there is probably too wide a gulf between our basic perspectives to reach agreement on the question he poses, they lead to a widening of the issues involved and, we may hope, to further clarification.

First, there is what Mr. Williams calls my "nostalgia . . . for the diplomatic Garden of Eden." I would admit, under oath, to a preference for pre-totalitarian, pre-thermonuclear Europe, recognizing, of course, that in Adam's world the good rarely appears without some bad. But I really don't think nostalgia was involved in my argument. Not this time.

The character of the old diplomacy I referred to has been abundantly described by un-nostalgic historians. In any event, I made plain that I see little likelihood of this diplomacy reappearing in our age, given the removal of most of its necessary conditions. What I did suggest was that we might learn a good deal from the qualities of mind that went with it—such qualities as patience, empiricism, and a sense of limits. When Mr. Williams draws such acts as the partition of Africa and the erasure of Spain from the New World across our path, he seems to imply that they are inseparable from the format of diplomacy within which they took place. But is it not more realistic to say that they were reflections (even as were many other aspects of the 19th century) of the state of public morality of the time? Today a different moral atmosphere prevails in the West; one that would not permit obvious amoralities of this sort. Witness, for example, the reaction to so comparatively mild a breach as Britain's landing at Suez in 1956.

But the modern international atmosphere does permit and encourage something as dangerous as amoral politics, and that is moralistic politics. Obviously a war in behalf of exalted moral objectives is more just than one serving purely economic or colonial objectives. But this leads to the heart of our tragic position. Moral wars tend to be, by the very nature of their issues (freedom, justice, rights, etc.), total, unconditional, and unlimited. How can you be partial, conditional, and limited when you are waging war, not with a finite nation, but with Evil? Senator Dodd declared in Los Angeles not long ago that "the only alternative to total defeat in the struggle against Communism is total victory." This is what many said in the 1930's about fascism. But I do not know how you tell when total victory or defeat takes place in a war concerned with transcendent moral ends. Surely the defeat of Russia alone —or even Russia together with China and Yugoslavia—would not represent the "total defeat" of Communism in a world that shows unhappy signs of spawning collectivism in countless places.

MY MAIN ARGUMENT was that when a generation has become used to war and diplomacy that are directed to, and ceaselessly justified by, moral ends alone—making the world safe for democracy, exterminating fascism, defeating Communism—the crowning danger is that it will invest every strategic goal with limitless moral intensity. As I write, a Congressman from Louisiana is quoted as saying the government's sale of planes to Yugoslavia "borders on treason." The general outcry may well force the gov-

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ernment into withdrawals that will have serious consequences to our security.

It is this type of thing, not the amoralities of another age, that seems to me our present problem. To worry about the possible consequences of a non-moralistic diplomacy is a little like worrying about a flood when water is needed to extinguish a fire.

This discussion bears upon Mr. Williams's point about the necessity of distinguishing among Communisms. We will indeed have to distinguish among Communist nations. But not, I hope, on grounds of the goodness or badness of the Communism involved. This, it seems to me, would be as inappropriate as distinguishing among nations in terms of their religions. I like to think that we make distinctions on grounds that are relevant to a foreign policy, not on ideological grounds of moral acceptability.

Mr. Williams is right in suggesting that it would be an oversimplification to identify all differences between Tito and Stalin or Hoxha and Khrushchev as solely those of conflicting nationalisms. The differences are commonly put in doctrinal terms not immediately related to nationalism. But so, at first, in the Reformation, were the differences between Rome and such men as Luther, Melanchthon, and Calvin. It was, however, nationalism that provided the determining context of the ideas put forward by these men, Christian though they considered themselves first and foremost. And so, I argue, will it be nationalism in the Communist world.

As to the rulers of the new nations, I do not doubt that many of them have visions of the good society. But ideas of the good society are not necessarily separated from the quest for total power, as the Grand Inquisitor and also much 20th-century history make plain. Given, on the one hand, ideas (and usually burning ideas) of the good society and, on the other, a scene of stupendous, almost inconceivable, obstacles to the realization of these ideas, preoccupation with absolute power is as certain among Western-educated native intellectuals as anything I can think of. Is it strange that they would find in absolute power the glittering promise of social reconstruction beyond anything that liberal democracy (even if it were imaginable in these areas) could provide in centuries?

Turning to Castro's Cuba, I agree readily that a social revolution is taking place. But why should this rule out league with a Hitler if Hitler were today the chief enemy of the United States? If Castro does have a *Weltanschauung* that would have led to affinity with Soviet Russia even back in the 30's, it was apparently undiscoverable by countless, trusting middle-class Cubans who, we know, welcomed his overthrow of Batista. However my essential point was not the character of Castro or his revolution. It was that we have no evidence as yet to assume sufficient affinity with Russian Communism to warrant direct action on our part.

I thank Mr. Williams for his enlargement and correction of my treatment of George Kennan and his relation to our policy of world containment. He is quite right. The machinery had been created, or at least well started, before Mr. Dulles came into office.

WHEN IT COMES to Mr. Williams's hypothesis that behind our recent containment policy lies the expansionist-frontier psychology of 19th-century America, I have to beg off. It is Mr. Williams, not Frederick J. Turner, who is the poet. Are we privileged to infer that the Oregon Trail has led straight to Pakistan and that West Berlin shares in the national feeling that produced "54–40 or Fight"? It is an arresting, even enchanting thought, especially to one whose own grandparents made their way to California in the approved fashion. I do not say it is wrong. There may be a direct line of descent from the War Hawks of 1812 to the drum-beaters of 1961. But I cannot find it. If I could I would have a vastly different conception of America's relation to the world since 1918 and of the intellectual and moral impact upon the free world of totalitarianism since the Bolsheviks took over Russia.

I agree with, and honor, Mr. Williams's words on the profound need for distinguishing at this time between true and false internationalism and for a mature sense of self-identity. But, as my article tried to say, I think we have to look elsewhere than to the frontier for the roots of the perspective that at present threatens to engulf us in problems that our foreign policy cannot conceivably meet.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Buber and Hasidism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

If Gershom Scholem's uninspired intellectualizations ["Martin Buber's Hasidism," October 1961] do, as he says, reflect the more basic Hasidic literature, then it must be the perpetual transcendence of this literature which makes the Hasidim such delightfully refreshing people. Like these joyful dancers, Martin Buber is forever acrobatic enough to leap over, or squeeze behind, the weighty intellectual formula.

In matters Hasidic, Mr. Scholem suffers from having too many feet on the ground.

ELI BURKOW

Jewish Institute of Religion
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It was with great dismay that I read Professor Scholem's critique. . . .

He begins by quoting Buber's reason for having chosen the later and more legendary accounts of Hasidism rather than the earlier theoretical writings as source material: " 'Because Hasidism in the first instance is not a category of teaching but one of life, our chief source of knowledge of Hasidism is its legends, and only after them comes its theoretical literature.' " Scholem finds this reasoning evidence of "a methodological approach which I consider more than questionable." That is a strong charge, and the basis for it lies, as we find a moment later, in Professor Scholem's reluctance to accept Buber's central distinction. "What is a 'category of teaching' as opposed to one of 'life' when it comes to analyzing a historical phenomenon whose teaching is inextricably tied to the life it preached?" Scholem asks.

In the phrase "inextricably tied to," Professor Scholem indulges in the same vagueness which he unjustly charges to Buber. For the Hasidim inevitably made a selection—from a large body of theoretical writings—of those teachings which became ethos for them. Moreover, the question as to how they understood those teachings, concretely and in life terms (a question that does not seem to have occurred to Professor Scholem), is a very crucial one indeed. The answer seems clearly to lie in some record of those lives, or in the essence of those lives distilled into myth, that is, legend, "which is truer than the chronicle for those who know how to read it." . . . Professor Scholem is interested in theology, Buber in the lived concrete. . . .

The second disturbing aspect of Professor Scholem's article is his suggestion that Buber distorts Hasidic teaching to conform more with his own "anti-platonic, existentialist" thought. . . . The center of Scholem's attack on Buber, in regard to the supposed distortion Buber's philosophy forces on his Hasidic interpretation, revolves around a single passage in which Buber says that Hasidism "kindled its followers to joy in the world as it is, in life as it is, in every hour of life in this world as that hour is" and that it taught a "constant, undaunted, and exalted joy in the Here and Now." Scholem objects, saying: "the 'undaunted and exalted joy' which Hasidism certainly did demand of its followers is *not* a joy in the Here and Now. In joy—or let me say in doing whatever he does in full concentration—man communes not with the Here and Now itself (as Buber would have it) but with what is *hidden* in the negligible garment of the Here and Now." . . . A rudimentary acquaintance with *I and Thou,* however, particularly the passage from section three which begins, "What is the eternal, primal phenomenon, present here and now, of that which we term revelation?" will make it clear that Buber is very much in accord with the Hasidism that communes with what is hidden in the garment of the Here and Now. . . .

The dispute, in this case, rests on the term "negligible" which Professor Scholem applies to the garment of the Here and Now, and it seems, at least to me, that Buber's subtle cutting through the either/or of spiritual and temporal reality makes much more sense in any reading of the Hasidic lore than does Professor Scholem's retention of the split. (Witness the saying of Rabbi Bunam: "I should not like to change places with our father Abraham! What good would it do God if Abraham became like blind Bunam, and blind Bunam became like Abraham? Rather than have this happen, I think I shall try to become a little more myself.") . . .

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Professor Scholem then raises the concreteness of the way (both in the sense of particularity and presence) in another context to demonstrate the similarity between Hasidic teaching and the gnostic Cabbala: "Buber's interpretation stresses the uniqueness of the task confronting every single individual. 'All men have access to God, but each in a way that is all his own.' This is indeed true, but it is not a novelty introduced by Hasidism. On the contrary the idea comes originally from the Lurianic Cabbala—that is to say, from that very gnosis at which Buber looks askance." . . . There is very little difference, according to Scholem, between the abstract notion in the Cabbala (whereby each man lifts up the sparks belonging to his own spiritual root in the great soul of Adam, each according to the particular place he once had in Adam's soul) and the very concrete Hasidic notion as expressed by Rabbi Bunam. Scholem is right in implying that *as ideas* these two notions are not very different. But as *ethos,* there is all the difference in the world, a difference that can never be recorded in religious texts, but only in a community's legends.

There is a final point that must be made here, because Professor Scholem, attempting to weight his case against Buber (apparently it cannot stand on objective grounds), throws the charge at him of "religious anarchism, which does not acknowledge any teaching about *what* should be done, but puts the whole emphasis on intensity, on *how* whatever one does is done."

In the first place, Scholem, who knows Buber, knows that he has not lived his life anarchistically in this sense, namely, without committing himself to what concretely ought to be done. In the second place, the charge is totally without basis in Buber's writings; the argument of Buber's writings is *against* the exaltation of feeling, or intensity for intensity's sake, while it is *for* the development of direction.

Now a direction (which flows out of relation) may seem devoid of concreteness to Scholem, but in order to establish that it is religious anarchism, he would have to demonstrate that profound religious teachings do not emphasize the way, the manner and direction of the deed, rather than its specific content. . . . It is the ossified forms of religious teachings, the canon and law, the theology, the whole gamut of an established orthodoxy, to which the ritual act alone, the rote following the letter, suffices.

In sum, the difference between the two men (aside from the points on which Scholem simply misunderstands Buber) is philosophic, and in general rests on that original fine distinction between "a category of teaching" and one of "life." What is distressing about Scholem's article is that Scholem refuses to recognize this fact and seeks rather to disqualify Buber from the dispute with such unfortunate remarks as "No doubt, for the purposes of aesthetic presentation the legends have a greater advantage and appeal, and lend themselves to a subjectivist interpretation more easily than the theoretical writings which contain a sustained line of argument and on which, in my humble opinion, a discussion of the meaning of Hasidism—even if we call it 'Hasidic life'—must be based."

The careful student of Buber, and of Hasidism, will see here an attempt to slur over the real dispute, namely, whether one is, or is not, to distinguish between teachings and life, between the precept as it is given, and the quality of the life as it is lived. . . .

DAVID HOROWITZ

Berkeley, California

MR. SCHOLEM *writes:*

If Mr. Burkow finds my observations too intellectual, I have no quarrel with him. I believe that an understanding of the great phenomenon of Hasidism does indeed require a certain amount of intellectual effort. If he says that Buber is "acrobatic enough to leap over the weighty intellectual formula," I am quite prepared to agree with him from my point of view, although I wonder whether Buber would be particularly amused by this kind of praise. . . .

Mr. Horowitz is understandably dismayed by my critique, and being acquainted with the mood of some of Buber's admirers, I must admit that it was with great reluctance that I embarked upon my critical analysis. My misgivings are borne out by the type of remarks offered by Mr. Horowitz in his answer to me.

He thinks that I indulge in the same vagueness which I charge to Buber because I speak of the teaching of Hasidism as being inextricably tied to the life it preached. As a matter of fact, the meaning of my argument is exactly the opposite of what Mr. Horowitz infers. If the Hasidim made a selection of those teachings which became meaningful in their life, it stands to reason that their greatest masters would not have put into writing teachings contrary to the gist of what Buber (and not the Hasidim)

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read into some of their legends. I am convinced that the teaching of the Hasidim closely corresponded to their life. They certainly omitted very many things from older literature, which no longer interested them, proving that what they did leave and enlarge upon was regarded as important in the context of their spiritual universe. To play around with the term "life" in order to skip over the only authentic interpretation the Hasidim themselves gave of this life, namely in their teachings—and this is what Mr. Horowitz does—smacks to me of irresponsibility. And so does the use of words or phrases such as "concretely," "life terms," "the lived concrete," all of which are very much in need of analysis, as I attempted to show in my essay. If the answer to the Hasidic secret lies in the record of lived lives, or in legend, then the tremendous effort made during the first fifty years of the movement's history to express the answer in terms of Cabbalistic concepts would have been wasted indeed. The truth of the matter is, of course, that records of lives are open to an endless number of interpretations on a spiritual level. My point was that the teachings for which the Hasidim themselves assumed responsibility were not only less open to such subjectivist interpretations, but also that they basically contradict the theories about the meaning of Hasidic life which Buber tried to distill from its legend.

"Scholem is interested in theology, Buber in the lived concrete." Yes, I am indeed interested in theology and so, for that matter, is Buber, whatever the name by which he prefers to call it. Mr. Horowitz is the first reader of Buber of whom I have heard who doesn't think that what Buber has expounded in his books included a theology of Hasidism. The difference between Buber and me is that I maintain that the theology of a historical phenomenon should be interpreted according to its theological literature, whereas Buber goes on to develop a theology out of his own interpretation of legends without caring whether this construction clashes with the theological literature. To call the legends text and the theology commentary only causes confusion. . . .

As for Mr. Horowitz's refutation of my central argument about the Here and Now by means of a sentence from Buber's *I and Thou,* I fail to see what purpose is served by quoting from Buber one of those statements based precisely on the ambiguity of terms I questioned at length in my discussion. Mr. Horowitz has too facile an answer. Anybody reading my full argument and not only the one sentence Mr. Horowitz chose to quote, will see the difference between a Here and Now which is annihilated in "meeting" God, and one that, according to Buber, is realized in its concreteness.

Legends are texts, and I consider the statement of Mr. Horowitz that ethos can never be recorded in religious texts, but only in a community's legends, as meaningless. This is the kind of talk to which I take exception in my article. Finally, Mr. Horowitz has not understood my point about Buber's religious anarchism. True, Buber's philosophy asks man to *take* a direction and to *make* a decision, but he doesn't say *which* direction and *which* decision. Moreover, he says that such a direction and decision cannot be formulated except in the world of the *It,* so much disparaged in his own thinking. Whatever the merits of this view—which is intrinsically anarchic—my point was that, rightly or wrongly, Hasidism never could share it because Hasidism remained "committed" to Jewish tradition as a *teaching in which directions could be formulated,* that is to say, as a teaching about *what* should be done. In Buber's philosophy this belongs to the world of the It, in which the anarchic life of the dialogue is killed. Buber has always been very honorable and indeed admirable and courageous in standing by this principle, as is well known to anybody who has followed his career. He said you should commit yourself, but he refused to say to what, although he as a person made his choice. This in a precise sense is the meaning of the term "religious anarchism": Do whatever you do, but do it in a "committed" way; that is to say (if this bogus term of "commitment" is translated), put your moral intensity and responsibility into it; or properly speaking, your heart.

Western Values & Total War

To the Editor of Commentary:

I am disappointed in your discussion on "Western Values and Total War" [October 1961]. [Sidney Hook, H. Stuart Hughes, Hans J. Morgenthau, and C. P. Snow] deliberate . . . whether it is better to be red than dead or . . . dead than red. What "red" means is left out of the discussion. . . . "Western values" are also left out . . . unless you reckon Professor Hook's momentary elaboration on political freedom, with the Jewish zealots of the year 70 C.E. as its noblest exemplars. . . .

(Rabbi) Samuel Volkman
Charleston, West Virginia

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To the Editor of Commentary:

I believe that there is a preferred possibility to being either red or dead. . . . As Mr. Morgenthau so aptly put it: in essence, civilization is MAN in the mass. Ergo: Save man, and Western civilization will at least have a chance. I believe that it is the government's responsibility to build shelters to save Americans in the mass. . . .

I believe that such an approach will give each of us a more positive way of living in this nuclear age, and at the same time improve the foreign policy position of the United States.

Eric O. Sonneman

Chicago, Illinois

To the Editor of Commentary:

I share Mr. Hook's skepticism about Mr. Hughes's assumption that the Russians have been deterred from expansion in Western Europe by fears of indigestion. But Mr. Hook, in his debate with Mr. Hughes, argues as if he were dealing with Henry Wallace and oversimplifies the record. After the Acheson-Lilienthal proposal of 1946 and until the recent Geneva test-ban negotiations, the American government's position on disarmament issues was (like the Soviets') hard to accept as anything but propaganda. Clearly Mr. Dulles, with his massive retaliation policy, was thoroughly committed to a nuclear strategy. Mr. Hook also ignores the fact that for several years NATO strategy has been committed to using nuclear weapons first in any serious struggle with the Soviets, even if the latter rely entirely on conventional weapons. The fetish of bigger and better bombs and the downgrading of conventional forces has left the Kennedy administration in the position of an ultimate reliance on nuclear war to protect West Berlin, despite the vulnerability of American cities and the helplessness of the government to protect its citizens. The posture makes one nostalgic for life on the Old Frontier.

Meanwhile both the Soviets and the Europeans may find it increasingly incredible that an American government would resort to nuclear weapons, except in national self-defense. Until the Russians show more interest in a realistic inspection system for general disarmament, the West must develop a strategy less dependent upon either strategic or tactical use of nuclear weapons, or upon purely American decisions about the level of force to be used. The situation also calls for readiness, so far lacking, to negotiate political conflicts in order to change the status quo, instead of finding an illusory haven in "standing firm." . . .

Cushing Strout

California Institute of Technology
Pasadena, California

To the Editor of Commentary:

I read Commentary's symposium with morbid fascination. . . . May I offer this personal thought—in general support of Sir Charles Snow and Mr. Morgenthau?

Are we not, perhaps, passing out of the stage of mutual nuclear deterrence? Both sides possess the means of totally destroying the other, but neither at present dares do it. The U. S., however, is rapidly moving toward a massive shelter-building program. The original motive of this program may be "humanitarian"—if the word has any meaning in this macabre context—but its end result is certain to be strategic.

In effect, we are seeking to build a degree of invulnerability to the enemy's deterrent for at least a large enough portion of our population to insure that "our side" survives. As soon as we have done this, three consequences seem inevitable:

1. The "balance of terror" will be upset. One does not need to accept all the implications of the "balance of terror" thesis to agree that upsetting it is apt to be dangerous.

2. Our *"classes dirigeants"*—and these will be the first to be supplied with shelters—are more apt to regard war as a thinkable proposition once they are invulnerable. Appalling as it may be, a leader . . . forced . . . to contemplate war with 40–70 million dead, is apt to think that war with a mere 5 or 10 million dead is an acceptable risk.

3. Worst of all, the Soviet reaction to any effective U. S. shelter-building program is certain to be another and more diabolical round in the arms race. No Soviet leader can accept a situation in which America achieves a degree of national survival that Russia does not possess. Ergo, the Soviets, too, will start to build weapons against which our shelters will be ineffective—to wit, biological bombs.

Eldon Griffiths
Foreign Editor

Newsweek
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Surely, C. P. Snow is right: neither side, the U. S. or Russia, is all good and noble; neither is all wicked and wrong. (But are they equally right or wrong, Sir Charles?)

Surely, H. Stuart Hughes is right: a uni-

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versal conflagration is distinct from a local or restricted one. (But is there such a thing as real force on a *human* scale, in which all men have a choice to live or die, Mr. Hughes?)

Surely, Sidney Hook is right: deterrents deter, and one ought never to sacrifice all values. (But is not life too a value, Mr. Hook?)

Surely Hans J. Morgenthau is right: war and surrender are both obnoxious, perhaps even absurd. (But is not war more absurd than surrender, Mr. Morgenthau?)

All the symposiasts agree: the issue is a moral one. What must we do to make the good life possible? I think there are only *two courses open: one is to live the good life* now, and the other is to prepare for it. Every society ought to encourage the pursuit of both courses, but each individual must choose one or the other.

Those who believe in living the good life now should continue to paint and worship, write, act, dance, inquire, speculate, enjoy the arts and the fruits of study. Those who are dedicated to a life of action or politics should devote their energies to seeing that the great powers (and eventually all) meet and meet, discuss and discuss, negotiate and negotiate until we achieve universal disarmament and eventual peace.

The good life is a full individual life; good politics is the production of a civilization by public agencies. Each pursues peace by means other than war. Each deserves full devotion. Some men now do justice to the former; it is time for the politically oriented to do justice to the latter.

PAUL WEISS

Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found the discussion, "Western Values and Total War," completely absorbing, if somewhat unsatisfying. . . .

I was disappointed to find no one willing to take up Professor Hook's suggestion that the nature of Western values be discussed. . . . The participants seemed so concerned with the strategy of total war, and Hook so occupied with his private war against Communism, that values per se were left behind as an "also-ran."

It would be interesting to know which Western values the discussants had in mind. Were they discussing the professed values or *the real values of Western civilization*? And indeed which parts of Western civilization? Would Professor Hook care to include the values underlying apartheid, white supremacy in Angola, Algeria, and the U. S., and Franco's fascism, as part of the value system of the West? Or perhaps the values inherent in such phenomena as machine guns in fallout shelters, guerilla bands to hunt down refugees fleeing from bombed cities, etc.?

Actually, the last item mentioned—the widely reported news of persons prepared to kill their fellow-Americans to preserve their family tombs (i.e., fallout shelters) for themselves—should give an important clue as to what kind of values are likely to survive a nuclear holocaust. This should give cause for alarm, since this may well be a logical extension of the system of real values under*lying our free enterprise society, rather than* its mere distortion. . . .

Professor Hook suggested that Sir Charles Snow and Professor Hughes were more or less guilty of equating the record of aggressions of the U. S. and the Soviet Union. To this charge I am prepared to plead guilty. Speaking as a Canadian, I find an increasing tendency amongst thinking people to say "A plague on both your houses." . . . We are frankly worried about the lack of an effective opposition in either country to the forces working for a showdown. As your "expendable" neighbors, we are concerned about Washington's crude pressure on our elected government to enroll us in the Nuclear Club. . . .

H. ROSENTHAL

YM & YWHA
Montreal, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I think it is in his argument with Mr. Philip Green [from the audience] that Mr. Hook most completely misses the point of this discussion, which was, after all, about moral values. It is true, to some extent, that every war destroyed people who had nothing to do with making it. But never has the disproportion between choosers and makers of war, and victims of war, been so great as now. The possibility of ending all life on earth is a real one. Enough fallout could do it, and the probability is strong that we have at hand, or soon will have, enough atomic weapons to produce this much fallout. We are dealing with the possibility of killing hundreds of millions of innocent people—perhaps billions—perhaps even of writing a permanent end to man's experiment. I say that a country that, to gain ends however praiseworthy, can coolly contemplate such an act has already lost the largest part of its moral values. . . .

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Mr. Podhoretz [the moderator] says that everyone is in favor of unilateral disarmament by the Russians. I doubt that this is the case. I think plenty of men could be found in Washington who would say that this would be a very dangerous development for the United States. It is a matter of public record that, at least until very recently, our leaders in Washington have feared and opposed disarmament. It is too bad that Sir Charles Snow only got to this point at the very end of the symposium. You bet the West is troubled about the answer to the question, "What would a totally disarmed world be like?" . . .

JOHN HOLT

Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

To support his thesis that survival at any cost is in contradiction to Western values, Professor Hook cites Judea's total war against Rome. However, he overlooks the fact that war was made "total" only through the agitation of a minority party.

The group most identified with the accepted Jewish tradition, the Pharisees, as well as the most learned rabbis, including Jochanan ben Zakkai, were against a total war which they knew would lead to the end of a Jewish national existence. Had this view prevailed, the Jews might have saved themselves the tragic history of the Diaspora, and Rome would have withered five centuries later anyway. Contrary to the implications of Professor Hook's remarks, the emphasis of life over death has always occupied a central role in Judaism.

Professor Hook is correct, however, in claiming that survival *at any cost* contradicts Western values. To submit, for example, to a society that advocates and practices genocide, such as Nazi Germany did, would indeed constitute such a contradiction, and advocates of a nuclear defense against such a regime might have a good case. . . .

Professor Hook further contends that if we surrender the deterrent, then the death of Western civilization is a certainty; on the other hand, if we keep the deterrent, war will not come because of the Communist emphasis on history and survival, and eventually a multilateral disarmament could be agreed upon. There is, however, no evidence that would support the hope of a multilateral disarmament within the next ten years. Moreover, it is the considered opinion of many of the leading minds of today, that unless such an agreement is reached, the chances of avoiding war are practically nil. . . .

A renunciation of the deterrent would not mean the end of Western civilization, even if we were to agree that Communist totalitarian society is the complete negation of Western values. As George Kennan has pointed out, there is a limit to the maximum radius of effective power control from any center. . . . But even if we grant the very improbable case that Russia would be able to wield effective power control on a global scale, is Professor Hook so naive as to believe that such an empire could survive indefinitely? Would not significant internal changes toward a freer society be forced on such an empire, given the present state of science and technology, with its capacity to fulfill humanity's basic material needs?

HARVEY FIELDS

Cambridge, Massachusetts

[*More correspondence on this subject will follow.*—ED.]

The Ego and Art

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Theodore Solotaroff's piece on Henry Miller and Seymour Krim ["All That Cellar-Deep Jazz," October 1961], penetrating as it is . . . seems to me to commit the error of a lukewarm reader of Henry Miller's who once told me that *The Wisdom of the Heart* was much superior to the rest of Miller's work. By discerning some arbitrary merit in this collection of essays, he was searching for an artistic alter-Miller presumably superior to that of the commonplace contraband. Thus Mr. Solotaroff damns Seymour Krim with the faint praise he accords his occasional sobrieties. Surely literary excesses are as crucial to Krim's effectiveness as a social critic as they are to Miller's. In both, these excesses are the product (sometimes the waste product) of the struggle to find an authentically personal idiom of protest. . . .

Mr. Solotaroff, like the majority of Miller's critics, finds his egotism offensive. He likewise triumphantly uncovers an unreconstructed ego-ridden Krim beneath the regulation garments of the liberated beatnik. Miller's egoism is partly compensated for by his "solid feeling of reality," but poor Krim has reached "the end of the line," with all of his talents relegated to the search for self. How long will it be before critics of Mr. Solotaroff's intelligence cease whining about the ego and begin studying its affective relation to the work of art? Lack-

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ing the bedrock of ego upon which they are grounded, *Cancer* and *Capricorn* would hardly be the compelling narratives they are. Nor would Krim's views possess anything like their genuine indigenous power. In the case of polemical writers like Miller and Krim, it is futile to consign the operations of the ego to a safe artistic remove and forbid its intrusion at moments when we, the readers, seek the comforting substantiality of ideas. The creative temper fortunately resists such nice equilibrations.

ANNETTE K. BAXTER
Barnard College
Department of American Civilization
New York City

Modern Faith

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I sincerely appreciate Dr. Marvin Fox's painstaking and lengthy review of my book *A Faith for Moderns* ["Rational Religion," October 1961]. It is a pity that despite the lengths to which he has gone, he did not feel it necessary to give his readers any idea of the contents and scope of the book. Instead, Dr. Fox has limited himself to attacking the book from his own Orthodox (or neo-Orthodox) position, with its unmistakable existentialist overtones. Here he is entirely within his rights, and no reply would be called for, were it not that the issue between us far transcends the reviewer's approval or disapproval. . . .

Dr. Fox scorns any effort to utilize the understanding of the world and of man which science affords as the basis for a religious world-view. In order to maintain his position, he is compelled to exaggerate and to distort our position. Thus he claims that "since the views of science on almost all questions are supposed to be granted absolute validity, we can either struggle to fit religious doctrines to these views or else abandon religion. Dr. Gordis chooses the former way and pays a heavy price for it." Actually, what is urged in the book is a recognition of the legitimate function and necessity for science in exploring the nature of reality, *and of the limitations of science* in this crucial undertaking. Obviously, our entire chapter "The Scientific Challenge" cannot be reproduced here. We cite here only a few lines: "The right and duty of religious faith to read the book of life through its own lenses become particularly important whenever, as is generally the case, science itself offers only a partial clue to reality. . . . For its conception of the universe, religion must turn to the findings of science which it disregards at its peril. Yet it must go beyond science in its endeavor to find a world-view that will be satisfying and life-giving. The believer stakes his life on his vision of God in the world."

Throughout his lengthy polemic, Dr. Fox insists on denying our contention that a vital religion cannot ignore the legitimate role of science in delineating the nature of man and the world. At the end of the review, Dr. Fox lets the cat out of the bag when he concedes that "every contemporary religion *must indeed take account of and come to terms with established scientific knowledge,* or else it degenerates into obscurantism." (Italics ours.) Then, in the very next sentence he indulges in the kind of double-talk which is the hallmark of so much contemporary theological writing, emanating from those who speak as though they were fundamentalists and believe that religion can be abstracted from culture, but who actually know better. For he writes: "However, no Western religion, certainly not Judaism or Christianity, can commit itself in advance to science as its basic framework without being caught in an impossible snare." I do not believe in arguing by epithet, but what is it, except double-talk or rhetoric, to admit in one breath that contemporary religion must indeed take account of and come to terms with established scientific knowledge, and in the very next declare that it must not commit itself in advance to science?

As against this fundamental distortion, however honestly projected, other misinterpretations are minor. I did not say that Orthodox believers have no intellectual problems; I did say that there are "untroubled believers" who have no intellectual problems. As an accredited spokesman for Orthodox Judaism, Dr. Fox is free to identify all "untroubled believers" with Orthodoxy, but it is he who has done it, and not I.

Moreover, I did not cite the verse in *Malachi* as "evidence" that traditional religion recognizes man as the highest level of evolution, as anyone can see by studying the passage in question.

As for my conviction that there is a unity underlying all creation and that man represents at present the highest manifestation of life known to us, Dr. Fox is at liberty to reject it. I find it implicit in the Creation account in Genesis. I find it even more clearly expressed in the consistent emphasis in Jewish ethical thought on consideration for the lower orders of creation. It is embodied in rabbinic law in the doctrine of *tsa'ar baale*

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hayyim, "the duty to avoid pain to all living creatures."

Evidently I have aroused Dr. Fox's displeasure by finding evidence for this conception of the unity of creation in which man constitutes the highest rung in the evolutionary ladder, in my reading of the biological record. At the same time, I make it abundantly clear that there are scientists who see no evidence of orthogenesis in the biological theory of evolution. Nonetheless, I insist that it is not merely wishful thinking on my part that sees in the evolutionary process abundant evidence that "as we ascend the evolutionary ladder from the amoeba to man, we encounter an ever-greater complexity of physical structure, a corresponding growth in the specialization of function among the various organs, together with an increased degree of efficiency, and an ever more developed nervous system with a heightened degree of consciousness, which reaches the maximum of self-awareness in man."

To maintain that man is part of the evolutionary process does *not* (*pace* Fox) negate his uniqueness. What Fox means by "absolute uniqueness" I do not know. Man derives from the other orders of creation and transcends them. He is, in other words, both unique and related to all the living.

Dr. Fox triumphantly dismisses the view in the book that it is implausible to the point of impossibility to assume that life appeared upon this planet and then underwent that complex development posited by biological science simply through the mechanism of chance. Dr. Fox declares that "these processes are taking place in an infinite time with an infinite number of chances." In his anxiety to score a coup, Dr. Fox has overlooked no less than three crucial elements in our position: (a) we are not dealing with an *infinity of time* but with a *finite segment of time* since the creation of the earth within the solar system took place at a given time in the history of the universe; (b) the emergence of life on this planet took place within *an even more limited segment of time;* and (c) we are concerned *not with a single event but with a myriad number of events,* which together constitute a *process*—with a basic underlying trend.

Even in this day of the glorification of the irrational, and the distrust of man's capacities, there are those who believe that a rational faith is both possible and necessary. And there are those, both in religion and without, who deny the possibility. I take my stand with those whose entire nature revolts against this inner schism and who, out of their faith in the unity of the universe and its Maker, will continue to strive after integrity in its basic sense, the wholeness of spirit in which reason and faith unite to create a world-view by which man can live.

(Dr.) Robert Gordis
Temple Beth-El of Rockaway Park
Belle Harbor, Long Island

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Marvin Fox betrays an ignorance of science when he maintains that the argument from design cannot be supported by scientific means. Fox's objection is that one cannot conclude that because the odds against life are 10^{160} to 1 it did not arise through random factors—because anything can happen in an infinite time with an infinite number of chances. Karl Popper has termed this type of objection "metaphysical," for it ignores the fact that when a scientist uses probability hypotheses he must impose certain restrictions which rule out extreme improbabilities. Otherwise science could never test any hypothesis, since in the mathematical theory of probability there is a certain probability for the most improbable event, and, therefore, any event is possible no matter how great the odds against it. Theoretically, if typewriter keys are hit at random, in an infinite amount of time there is a certain probability that they will type out all books ever written. But no one in his right mind would use such an argument to claim that one couldn't determine if a certain book were produced by chance or not. Since the scientific evidence indicates that the universe has a definite age, the claim that an infinite amount of time is involved confuses the theory of probability in mathematics with its application to empirical data.

Herold S. Stern
New York City

Mr. Fox *writes:*

Let us see who is guilty of "double-talk." I cannot believe that Dr. Gordis is so lacking in the capacity to read a text that he cannot distinguish between "taking account of and coming to terms with established scientific knowledge" and "committing ourselves *in advance* to science as our basic *framework.*" What blinds him is his desire to ride two horses simultaneously while they are going in different directions.

Dr. Gordis is letting cats out of bags by sleight of hand, since there are no cats and no bags. Nowhere in my review, nor in anything else that I have ever said or written, have I been so naive as to question the le-

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gitimate claims of the sciences. Like Dr. Gordis, I am concerned to define the extent of those claims and also to mark out the limitations of science. However, I repeat my charge that throughout his book he first ascribes to science far more than it can justly claim, and then backs away from his own admissions when they become embarrassing to religion. (I am prepared to cite any number of specific instances, on request, in addition to those mentioned in my review.)

The "double-talk" continues. Dr. Gordis asserts, "I did not say that Orthodox believers have no intellectual problems; I did say that there are 'untroubled believers' who have no intellectual problems." In passing, it is worth noting that the term "orthodox" in my review becomes "Orthodox" in Gordis's rejoinder. . . . But, more important, Gordis has conveniently forgotten pages 1 and 2 of his book. The paragraph about "untroubled believers" begins on page 1. It continues on page 2, where we are told that these believers "have found an island of spiritual security in various types of religious orthodoxy, Christian and Jewish.". . .

More "double-talk." If the verse in *Malachi* was not cited as "evidence," then as what was it cited? Let the readers judge: "The faith in one Living God as the Creator of all goes even further. It insists that there is no impassable gulf between inanimate nature and living beings, and no iron wall separating the lower orders of creation from man. Every living thing in the universe can echo the prophet's word: Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us! The impersonal conclusion of modern biological science that man is simply a higher level in evolution was anticipated. . . ."

And even more. Everyone knows that Jewish tradition, and Biblical and rabbinic law all enjoin us to be kind to animals and to avoid causing them needless pain. Yet, by no logical process that I know of can one infer from this injunction Dr. Gordis's claim that "all life is a unit and man is *only* the highest known element on the evolutionary ladder." (My italics.) This is a view of man which, as I said in the review, runs counter to the whole Western religious tradition. When I speak of man's "absolute uniqueness," I mean just what Dr. Gordis repeatedly tells us—that man alone is created in the image of God and that he alone has a direct relationship with God. I challenge Dr. Gordis to square these claims with his view that "man is *only* the highest known element in the evolutionary ladder."

Both Dr. Gordis and Mr. Stern try to defend the proposition that the natural world gives us empirical evidence for the existence of God. Since these efforts are all more or less elaborate versions of the Argument from Design, I believe they can be disposed of most readily by referring the proponents to Hume's *Dialogues on Natural Religion.* It is hard to see how anyone who has studied that book can continue to have confidence in the Argument from Design. Even if we were to grant that life or the world could not have arisen by chance, what does that tell us about their source? Life may have arisen as a cooperative effort of a multiplicity of beings rather than as the exclusive work of a single being. If it was caused by a single being, moreover, we still have no knowledge of its nature. This seems a rather fruitless line of inquiry for religious purposes.

One of the key arguments which Dr. Gordis is defending is that it is utterly preposterous to suppose that life arose by chance since (according to some mathematicians) the odds against this are 10^{160} to 1. He argues against me that this has to occur in a finite time because "The creation of the earth within the solar system took place at a given time in the history of the universe." But on what ground does he suppose that life . . . had its origin on earth? . . . Dr. Gordis's admission that we know nothing of origins is the essential point. Ultimate origins are not a subject for which we have or can have scientific evidence. If we believe in God as the creator of the universe, it is for reasons other than scientific evidence. If this is irrationalism, both Dr. Gordis and I are irrationalists, but he has drawn this conclusion not I.

Finally, Dr. Gordis begins his letter by labeling me "Orthodox," and thus tries to discredit my criticisms as a purely partisan attack. . . . I prefer to have the issues judged on the basis of the evidence and on the merits of our respective arguments. I should have thought that on this point we would be in agreement.

Corrections

In the note to Alfred Kazin's article in our December 1961 issue, the title of Mr. Kazin's latest book was incorrectly given; the correct title is *The Open Form.*

* * *

In James Grossman's article, "The Sacco-Vanzetti Case Reconsidered," in last month's issue, the next to last line of the footnote on page 39 should not have read "by the pressure . . ." but "by the presence of Gill, Ehrmann, and the other witnesses."—ED.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

CITY PLANNING AND URBAN REALITIES*

Herbert J. Gans

AMERICAN INTELLECTUALS have begun to rediscover the city. Not since the days of the muckrakers has there been so much interest in local politics and in the "physical" features of the city—the problems of slums and urban renewal, middle-income housing, the lack of open space, the plight of the downtown business district, and the ever-increasing traffic congestion. The new concern with questions usually relegated to architects and planners has been stimulated especially by two recent changes in city life. The rapid influx of Negro and Puerto Rican immigrants has created slums in some neighborhoods where intellectuals live, forcing them to choose between fighting for neighborhood improvement or joining the rest of the middle class in flight. At the same time, the postwar building boom—in office buildings as well as residential projects—is altering and destroying some favorite intellectual haunts like New York's Greenwich Village and Chicago's Near North Side.

This change has provided new material for one of the basic themes of the ongoing critique of American society—the destruction of tradition by mass-produced modernity. During the 1950's, the critique centered on the ravages produced by mass culture and by suburbia. In the 1960's it is likely to focus on the destruction of traditional urbanity by new forms of city building.

Many of the ideas behind the new urban critique have come from the writings of Jane Jacobs, an associate editor of *Architectural Forum*. Now she has put her ideas into a book which seems destined to spearhead the attack, just as another book by an editor of another Luce magazine—I refer to William H. Whyte's *The Organization Man*—spearheaded the attack on suburbia. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* is a thoughtful and imaginative tract on behalf of the traditional city, an analysis of the principles that make it desirable, an attack on the city planner—whom Mrs. Jacobs takes to be the agent of its transformation—and a program of new planning principles that she believes will create vital cities and vital neighborhoods.

The vital neighborhood—and vitality is Jane Jacobs' central aim—should be diverse in its use of land and in the people who inhabit it. Every district should be a mixture of residences, business, and industry; of old buildings and new; of young people and old; of rich and poor. Mrs. Jacobs argues that people want diversity, and in neighborhoods where it exists, they strike roots and participate in community life, thus generating vitality. When diversity is lacking, when neighborhoods are scourged by what she calls the great blight of dullness, residents who are free to leave do so, and are replaced by the poverty-stricken, who have no other choice, and the areas soon turn into slums.

According to Mrs. Jacobs, the most important component of vitality is an abundant street life. Neighborhoods that are designed to encourage people to use the streets, or to watch what goes on in them, make desirable quarters for residence, work, and play. Moreover, where there is street life, there is little crime, for the people on the street and in the buildings which overlook it watch and protect each other, thus discouraging criminal acts more efficiently than police patrols.

The abundance of street life, Mrs. Jacobs argues, is brought about by planning principles which are diametrically opposed to

* A review of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, by Jane Jacobs (Random House, 458 pp., $5.95).

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those practiced by orthodox city planners. First, a district must have several functions, so that its buildings and streets are used at all times of the day, and do not (like Wall Street) stand empty in off-hours. The area should be built up densely with structures close to the street and low enough in number of stories to encourage both street life and street watching. Blocks should be short, for corners invite stores, and these bring people out into the streets for shopping and socializing. Sidewalks should be wide enough for pavement socials and children's play; streets should be narrow enough to prevent intensive and high-speed automobile traffic, for the automobile frightens away pedestrians. Small parks and playgrounds are desirable, but large open spaces—especially those intended only for decoration and not for use—not only deaden a district by separating people from each other but also invite criminals. Buildings should be both old and new, expensive and cheap, for low rents invite diversity in the form of new industries, shops, and artists' studios.

Neighborhoods which are designed on the basis of these principles—and which provide Mrs. Jacobs with concrete evidence for her argument—are areas like New York's Greenwich Village and San Francisco's Telegraph Hill (where residences of all types, prices, and ages mix with small business, industry, and cultural facilities), and low-income ethnic quarters like Boston's North End and Chicago's Back-of-the-Yards district.

The new forms of city building, Mrs. Jacobs says, discourage street life, and create only dullness. High-rise apartment buildings, whether in public housing or private luxury flats, are standardized, architecturally undistinguished, and institutional in appearance if not operation. They house homogeneous populations, segregating people by income, race, and often even age, and isolating them in purely residential quarters. Elevators, and the separation of the building from the street by a moat of useless open space, frustrate maternal supervision of children, thus keeping children off the street. Often there are no real streets at all, because prime access is by car. Nor is there any reason for people to use the streets, for instead of large numbers of small stores fronting on a street, there are shopping centers containing a small number of large stores—usually chains—each of which has a monopoly in its line. The small merchant, who watches the street and provides a center for neighborhood communication and social life, is absent here. In such projects, the residents have no place to meet each other, and there is no spontaneous neighborhood life. As a result, people have no feeling for their neighbors, and no identification with the area. In luxury buildings, doormen watch the empty streets and discourage the criminal visitor, but in public housing projects, there are no doormen, and the interior streets and elevators invite rape, theft, and vandalism. Areas like this are blighted by dullness from the start, and are destined to become slums before their time.

The major responsibility for the new forms of city building Mrs. Jacobs places on the city planner and on two theories of city form: Ebenezer Howard's low-density Garden City, and Le Corbusier's high-rise apartment complex, the Radiant City. The planner is an artist who wants to restructure life by principles applicable only to art. By putting these principles into action, he is methodically destroying the features that produce vitality. His planning theories have also influenced the policy makers, and especially realtors, bankers, and other sources of mortgage funds. As a result, they refuse to lend money to older but still vital areas which are trying to rehabilitate themselves, thus encouraging further deterioration of the structures until they are ripe for slum clearance, redevelopment with projects—and inevitable dullness.

ANYONE WHO HAS ever wandered through New York's Greenwich Village or Boston's North End is bound to respond to Mrs. Jacobs' conception of a vital city. Her analysis of the mechanics of street life, and of the ways in which people use buildings, streets, and vacant spaces in such areas is eye-opening. The principles of neighborhood planning which derive from her observations—she is herself a resident of Greenwich Village—are far more closely attuned to how people actually live than are those of orthodox city planning. It would be easy to succumb to the charm of the neighborhoods she describes, and to read her book only as a persuasive appeal for their re-

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tention. But since Mrs. Jacobs is out to reform all of city planning, it is necessary to examine her central ideas more closely.

Her argument is built on three fundamental assumptions: that people desire diversity; that diversity is ultimately what makes cities live and that the lack of it makes them die; and that buildings, streets, and the planning principles on which they are based, shape human behavior. The first two of these assumptions are not entirely supported by the facts of the areas she describes. The last assumption, which she shares with the planners whom she attacks, might be called the physical fallacy, and it leads her to ignore the social, cultural, and economic factors that contribute to vitality or dullness. It also blinds her to less visible kinds of neighborhood vitality and to the true causes of the city's problems.

Ethnic neighborhoods like the North End, or the Italian and Irish sections of Greenwich Village, are not diverse, but quite homogeneous in population as well as in building type. The street life of these areas stems not so much from their physical character as from the working-class culture of their inhabitants. In this culture, the home is reserved for the family, so that much social life takes place outdoors. Also, children are not kept indoors as frequently as in the middle class, and since they are less closely supervised in their play, they too wind up in the streets.

If such districts are near the downtown area, they may attract intellectuals, artists, and bohemian types, who also tend to spend a good deal of time outside their apartments, contributing further to the street life. The street life, the small stores that traditionally serve ethnic groups and other cultural minorities, and the area's exotic flavor then draw visitors and tourists, whose presence helps to make the district even livelier. The resulting blend of unusual cultures makes for a highly visible kind of vitality. It helps if the district is old and basically European in architecture, but traditional-looking frontages can be superimposed by today's clever builder.

In other working-class neighborhoods, especially those far away from the downtown area, street life is also abundant, but the people and the stores are neither ethnic nor esoteric. In middle-class neighborhoods, there is no street life, for all social activities take place inside the home, children play less often on the sidewalks, and the street is used only for transportation. Such neighborhoods look dull, notably to the visitor, and therefore they seem to be less vital than their ethnic and bohemian counterparts. But visibility is not the only measure of vitality, and areas that are uninteresting to the visitor may be quite vital to the people who live in them.

This possibility must also be considered for the new luxury and middle-class housing projects. Since they are largely occupied by childless middle-class people, they look even duller than other areas, just as their newness makes them seem more standardized to the visitor than older areas in which the initial homogeneity of buildings has been altered by conversion or just covered by the accretions of dirt and age. It is clear that we need to learn how residents live in such projects before we can be sure of the validity of Mrs. Jacobs' charges.

In proposing that cities be planned to stimulate an abundant street life, Mrs. Jacobs not only overestimates the power of planning in shaping behavior, but she in effect demands that middle-class people adopt working-class styles of family life, child rearing, and sociability. The truth is that the new forms of residential building—in suburb as well as city—are not products of orthodox planning theory, but expressions of the middle-class culture which guides the housing market, and which planners also serve. Often the planners serve it too loyally, and they ignore the needs of a working-class population. Thus, Jane Jacobs' criticism is most relevant to the planning of public housing projects, for its middle-class designers have made no provision for the street life that these particular tenants probably want.

But middle-class people, especially those raising children, do not want working-class—or even bohemian—neighborhoods. They do not want the visible vitality of a North End, but rather the quiet and the privacy obtainable in low-density neighborhoods and elevator apartment houses. Little of their social life involves neighbors, and their friends may be scattered all over the metropolitan area, as are the commercial

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and recreational facilities which they frequent. For this, they want a car, expressways, and all the freedom of movement that expressways create when properly planned. Middle-class people tend to value status over convenience, and thus they reject neighborhoods in which residence and business are mixed—or in which there is any real diversity in population. Having no love for walking or for riding public transit, they have brought shopping centers into being. Nor does their life style leave much room for the small merchant. Since their tastes are no longer ethnic but not yet esoteric, they prefer the supermarket to the small store, for it does provide more choice—if only among prosaic items—and its wider aisles facilitate gossip with neighbors.

One can quarrel with some of these tastes, but the fact is that the areas about which Mrs. Jacobs writes were built for a style of life which is going out of fashion with the large majority of Americans who are free to choose their place of residence. The North End and the Back-of-the-Yards district are not holding their young people, who tend to move to the suburbs as soon as they have children to raise. Even in Europe, the old working-class districts invariably empty out when prosperity reaches the blue-collar workers.

The middle-class visitor does not see these cultural changes. Nor does he see that the houses in these traditional districts are often hard to maintain, that parking is often impossible, that noise and dirt are ever-present, that some of the neighbors watch too much, and that not all the shopkeepers are kind. Because the traditional districts are so different from his own neighborhood, and because he is a visitor, he sees only their charm and excitement. He therefore is most understandably reluctant to see them disappear.

But for the planning of cities, the visitor's wishes are less important than the inhabitant's. One cannot design all neighborhoods for a traditional style of life if only a few people want to live this way. Nevertheless, areas like the North End and the Village are worth saving. They provide low-rent housing for people with low incomes; they give pleasure to visitors, and may even attract tourists; and they are appealing reminders of our European heritage and our pre-automobile past. The city would be a poorer place without them.

Even so, the future of the American city is not going to be determined by the life or death of the North Ends and the Greenwich Villages. The real problems lie elsewhere. Mrs. Jacobs' concentration on these areas diverts her from properly analyzing the more fundamental problems, even while she makes some highly pertinent comments. This can best be illustrated by examining her discussion of slums and her proposals for urban renewal.

As noted earlier, she argues that slums are caused ultimately by lack of diversity. Homogeneous and dull areas are deserted by residents who have the resources to go elsewhere, and are replaced by people who have no other choice, and who, for reasons of poverty and racial discrimination, are forced to live in overcrowded conditions. She suggests that if these areas could be made more diverse, the initial occupants might not leave, and owners would then be able to rehabilitate the buildings.

THIS ANALYSIS is too simple. People leave such areas not to seek diversity but to practice new life styles, and additional diversity would not persuade them to stay. It is true that some areas occupied by non-mobile ethnic groups, notably the North End and Back-of-the-Yards, hold their residents longer than other areas. It is also true that these areas are not slums; they are low-rent districts, and Mrs. Jacobs is right in insisting on the distinction. Slums (she calls them perpetual slums) are areas in which housing and other facilities are physically and socially harmful to the inhabitants and to the larger community, primarily because of overcrowding. Low-rent areas (which she calls unslumming slums) may look equally dilapidated to the casual observer—and planners sometimes base their decisions only on casual observation—but they are not overcrowded and they are not harmful. Mrs. Jacobs criticizes urban renewal—and rightly so—for confusing such areas with real slums, and clearing them needlessly with grievous hurt to their inhabitants. She proposes that they can be rehabilitated by providing home and tenement owners with easier access to mortgage funds, and by planning for greater diversity. This proposal

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has merit, although landlords probably would not undertake as much rehabilitation as she envisages unless the area were attracting middle-class people with quasi-bohemian tastes—as in the case of the Village and Philadelphia's West Rittenhouse Square district.

But such neighborhoods—and purely working-class ones like the North End—are numerically unimportant in most cities. It is also no coincidence that they are occupied almost exclusively by whites. Their improvement cannot solve the problem of the real slums. These slums are not caused by dullness—they are often similar in plan and architecture to low-rent areas—but by the overcrowding of buildings already old by poverty-stricken and otherwise deprived non-whites, who have no other place to go. To be sure, such people usually move into areas being deserted by their previous residents, but even when the older residents are not leaving, the same thing can happen. Chicago's Hyde Park district was not being deserted by its middle-class residents, but portions of it became a slum because the Negro Black Belt to the north simply could not accommodate any more migrants.

Once an area becomes an overcrowded slum, rehabilitating the structures is no solution. The crucial step in rehabilitation is the uncrowding of the buildings. But slum structures are owned by absentee landlords who have no incentive to rehabilitate because they reap immense profits from overcrowding. Even if they were willing to convert rooming houses back to apartments, most of the slum dwellers who would then have to move would not be able to do so. They cannot afford to pay the rentals demanded for an apartment, and since they are non-white, other districts of the city are unwilling to accept them even if there are vacant apartments, which is rarely the case.

The slums cannot be emptied unless and until there is more low-cost housing elsewhere. Private enterprise cannot afford to build such housing. The traditional solution has been to rely on public housing, but thanks to the opposition of the real-estate men and the private builders, it has never been supplied in large enough amounts. Even then, it had to be located in the slums, because other city districts were unwilling to give over vacant or industrial land. In order to minimize clearance, public housing has had to resort to elevator buildings, and in order to protect itself from the surrounding slums, it has constructed fenced-in projects. In order to satisfy its powerful opponents that it was not wasting tax money on ne'er-do-wells, it has had to impose institutional restrictions on its hapless occupants, and in order to avoid competition with the private housing market, it has been forced to expel tenants whose income rises above a certain level.

Mrs. Jacobs suggests that the government stop building public housing, and instead subsidize builders to make their units available to low-income tenants. This is a useful suggestion, and one that has been proposed by planners and public housing advocates before. But earlier attempts to scatter low-income housing in other ways have been rejected by the recipient neighborhoods. Mrs. Jacobs' scheme has more merit than some earlier ones, but I doubt whether middle-class areas in the city and suburbs will make room for the large number of non-white poor who need to be taken out of overcrowded slums.

The sad fact is that until we abolish poverty and discrimination—or until the middle class becomes tolerant of poor non-white neighbors—the government is probably going to have to build more low-income ghettos.

UNFORTUNATELY, Mrs. Jacobs' anger with the planners is so intense that she blames them for the sins of private enterprise and the middle class, and she is eager to return functions to private enterprise which it has shown itself unable and unwilling to perform. She also forgets that private enterprise—acting through the well-heeled builder and realtor lobby in Washington—is responsible for some of the more obnoxious features of the urban renewal laws, and for hamstringing public housing in the ways I have indicated. Her blanket indictment of planners detracts from the persuasiveness of her other proposals, and antagonizes people who might agree with her on many points. More important, it is likely to win her the support of those who profit from the status quo, of the nostalgic who want to bring back the city

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and the society of the 18th and 19th centuries, and of the ultra-right-wing groups who oppose planning—and all government action—whether good or bad.

Orthodox city planning deserves considerable criticism for its anti-urban bias, for giving higher priority to buildings, plans, and design concepts than to the needs of people, and for trying to transform ways of living before even examining how people live or want to live. But not all the planners think this way—actually, much of the theory Mrs. Jacobs rejects was developed by architects and architecturally-trained planners—and some of her ideas have in fact been set forth by planners themselves.

No one, it is true, has stated these ideas as forcefully as she, or integrated them into an over-all approach before. The neighborhoods with which she is most concerned cannot serve as models for future planning, but the way in which she has observed them, the insights she has derived, and the principles she has inferred from her observations can—and ought to be—adapted for use in planning cities and suburbs in the future. Her book is a pathbreaking achievement, and because it is so often right, I am all the more disappointed by the fact that it is also so often wrong.

RELIGIOUS LIFE IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL*

Ernest Stock

When Theodor Herzl first jotted down the notes for his *Judenstaat,* he envisioned Europe's Jews voyaging to the Promised Land by communities, each guided by its own rabbi. "Our Jewish faith is what we have in common," he wrote, picturing his state as a place where that faith would be practiced in devout yet enlightened fashion by one and all.

Most of those who made Herzl's dream a reality came to the Land not only without their rabbis but also without their Jewish faith. The society they built was a secular one; religion belonged to the *galut* which they had left behind. Thus Israel came to be the one country outside the Communist bloc where Jews preached and practiced a militant secularism, glowering at the rigid Orthodoxy at the opposite pole across a vast no man's land of indifference.

For a number of years now Rabbi Herbert Weiner, known to Commentary readers as an astute interpreter of the Israeli scene, has been on the lookout for the signs that would point to a new dynamism in the country's religious life, other than the slow drift from the extremities into the gray center. This book is a result of his quest. While it does not have the answer to what is known in some Christian circles as the Mystery of Israel—whether the rebirth of a Jewish commonwealth has any religious significance—it must be welcomed as a sensitive and intelligent attempt to deal with the one aspect of Israel's existence that has been buried under the avalanche of comment on its economics, politics, and sociology.

As essential background to an understanding of subsequent developments, Weiner offers an excellent popular exposition of the *millet,* the system of communal religious autonomy prevalent under the Turks and taken over by the Mandatory administration. It is this heritage rather than the Western ideal of separation between church and state which still governs the underlying relationship. Although sovereign political organization has now replaced the *millet* for Israel's Jewish community, it is inevitable that the vestiges of the former system should come into conflict with the machinery of the polity. When there is enough human interest in these controversies, then "religious" news from Israel makes the world's headlines: Who (or what) is a Jew? . . . Who can marry whom and under what auspices? . . . Who should bury whom and in what plot of ground? Rabbi Weiner takes us behind the scenes

* A review of *The Wild Goats of Ein Gedi: A Journal of Religious Encounters in the Holy Land,* by Herbert Weiner (Doubleday, 312 pp., $4.50).

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of one of these widely publicized episodes, and in doing so places all of them in their proper perspective as rear-guard engagements in a struggle whose outcome is quite predetermined, and which can hardly affect the true religious issue in Israel: namely, the ultimate fate of Judaism as a faith in a homogeneous Jewish society enjoying political sovereignty.

If here a price is being paid, it is because Orthodoxy, while unable or unwilling to stimulate evolution from within, is in a position to put obstacles in the way of attempts at change from without. As one of the centers of power in the state, it uses that power first of all to maintain and consolidate its own status within a wider status quo. While secularism too is part of that status quo, new religious forms by definition are not, and the Orthodox establishment is bound to oppose them. Any innovating movement is thereby faced with a handicap which is absent, for instance, in the United States. The handicap could no doubt be overcome by a sufficient dose of genuine fervor, but that is a commodity hard to come by these days, in Israel as elsewhere. The "Progressive" Sabbath services in Jerusalem are poorly attended, and the congregation's leaders complain that the resident "Anglo-Saxons" stay away, even though the services presumably offer what they are looking for: intelligible ritual of reasonable duration in an aesthetic framework, with enough of the traditional to satisfy the nostalgic.

It can be argued that the price has been well worth paying if the gain has been avoidance or even postponement of a *Kulturkampf*. Had there been a numerically weightier core of fundamentalists, *à la* Naturei Karta, to whom Zionism's messianic claims are pure anathema, it is conceivable that secular leadership might have been goaded into the kind of repressive measures by which Kemal Ataturk counteracted the anti-nationalist tendencies of Islam. As it is, the willingness (or eagerness) of Israel's "modern" Orthodoxy to take part in political life moves the conflict to a plane where compromise is attainable—and is constantly being attained.

It comes as no surprise against this background that Rabbi Weiner's gleanings in the field of new religious experiments remained scanty. The organized groups he came across were either fringe phenomena—interesting in themselves but having little more impact on the country's religious life than the Amish have on that of the U. S.; or else their motivation for the collective adventure was scarcely religious at all. The late Chief Rabbi Kook's benign dictum—recalled by his son in the interview which the author first published in COMMENTARY—that the Marxist kibbutzniks were being religious without knowing it, overtaxes the concept of religion, as shown up by the wag who asked if it also applied to the atheists in a Soviet collective.

On the other hand, Weiner makes only passing mention of the existing Orthodox kibbutzim. It is true that there is nothing new about the Judaism practiced in the Kibbutz Dati, but the fact that there are a dozen or so communities which have succeeded in adapting an Orthodox way of life to the demands of the agricultural collective is worth the telling. The same could be said of the Bnei Akiva movement's yeshivot, where many of the young farmers spend a year or two studying before going back to the plow.

As part of his "field trip" through the religious landscape of Israel, Weiner introduces the reader to some of the personalities, Jewish and Christian, whose views might bear on the Mystery. In an otherwise inconclusive session, Buber expresses himself sharply on the Arab-Israel problem; Rabbi Kook *fils* criticizes both Ben Gurion and Ahad Ha'am for using the Bible as a means for serving man and the state rather than for its own sake or as revelation of divine will; and the peppery Dr. Yehoshua Leibowitz pursues his familiar role as the chief Orthodox critic of Orthodoxy, berating the rabbinate for not daring to adapt Halacha to the needs of a modern state.

A visit to Degania provides an opportunity for communing with the ghost of A. D. Gordon, that Tolstoyan figure whose memory is being kept alive in the neat little kibbutz museum, while mention of his "religion of labor" brings puzzlement to the faces of the third-generation kibbutzniks. The latter's ersatz religious celebrations struck Weiner as artificial and spiritless.

Yigal Yadin, taking time out from his dig at Hatzor, told the American rabbi

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that if there was to be a vital Jewish religion in the future it must again have some special association with the Land. This fits in with Weiner's own preoccupation throughout the book with the particular quality of the countryside and its effect on the spiritual development of the people that dwell in it. He finds that Yehuda Halevi had already said much the same thing: "This land will receive and give root only to a particular kind of religious seed," one characterized by "allness" and total commitment.

That there is a potent mystique about the landscape of Palestine no one can deny. But no one can assert either that it was the main catalyst in the emergence of *homo religiosus,* or that the repeated encounters between human destiny and divine inspiration took place in it simply because the locale was propitious. And if it was so, on what basis may one expect a recurrence? Since when does the immutability of the setting make for cyclical human history? The impact of natural phenomena on the imagination has itself become greatly attenuated: a man listening to the radio in his centrally heated Jerusalem flat takes only casual notice, if any, of the majestic cloud formations of the late rainy season, and few except tourists still pause to watch the magnificent sunsets over the mountains of Moab.

THIS IS BUT another way of saying that the influences which have been dissolving the religious basis of society in the West are present in Israel as well. Israel, moreover, is still riding the crest of a successful nationalism, which is hardly ever a receptive seedbed for new forms of religion. It is true that in Israel as elsewhere there is a vague yearning, among the young in particular, for something more satisfying to the soul than the middle-class comforts incipient prosperity has put within reach. But whether the road from this starting point to true religiosity is shortened by the religiously-charged natural environment is open to question.

Perhaps Rabbi Weiner's most perceptive observation is that "the Israeli is probably religious and irreligious in the same proportion as can be found in any Western land." Yet he is not on such sure footing—unlike the wild goats of the title, whose relevance to the main theme, incidentally, remains the minor mystery of this book—when he attributes the absence of the kind of "hothouse religion" that flourishes in suburban America to the conditions of life in present-day Israel which "make it difficult to find time or energy for anything except the absolutely vital and necessary." It is by now axiomatic that much of the Jewish religious revival in the U. S. is a function of the role of Jewishness within the Herbergian triptych. Israel, on the other hand, is to all intents and purposes monolithic in its Jewishness, and the dominant Jewish group is neither competing with nor influenced by the minority Muslim and Christian segments. Nor is this organic self-sufficiency simply a product of political sovereignty: the *millet* system effectively impregnated each group against religious or cultural cross-fertilization, obviating the need for a common denominator.

Since the millennial element in Christianity is by far the stronger, the Christian religious functionaries whom Weiner sought out are on the whole firmer believers in the Mystery of Israel than the Jews are themselves. Being convinced that the physical return has some metaphysical significance, they chose to be on-the-spot observers and, perhaps, lend a hand. This, however, does not make them soul-snatching missionaries; on the contrary, Weiner felt that quite a few of them were being "Judaized"—at least in externals—through their immersion in Israeli life. It is probably significant that most of these men are of Jewish origin. Their stories, and their views about the state of Judaism as Rabbi Weiner reports them, make absorbing reading; none more so than the tale of the young Protestant nuns from Darmstadt in Germany, who came to atone for their people's collective sin. Speaking Hebrew and working cheerfully as nurses in hospitals, they are being accepted by their Israeli colleagues as fellow workers rather than as do-gooders motivated by an alien religion.

As against such isolated efforts at a Christian-Jewish symbiosis, Weiner notes a general absence of dialogue between the two faiths in Israel. He finds the mainstream of Christian religious life in the land of its origin depressingly barren and dry, as

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though the presence of the concrete reminders of its birth and the long history of bickering over their possession had drained it of vitality. Dwelling only cursorily on the state of Islam, Weiner found it vegetating almost lifelessly in the inhospitable soil. There is a strong hint in these pages that in this age religion may be better nourished by the thought of a mythical Zion than by a real one; and that the Zion of the heart shrinks away before the authenticity of the mound of earth and stone.

AN APOLOGIA FOR ADOLF HITLER*

G. F. Hudson

IT WAS INEVITABLE that sooner or later some historian should produce a serious apologia for Hitler. This has now arrived, but not from Germany, where the aftermath of the Third Reich is still too painful for such a performance to be acceptable from any personage of academic standing. From the British historian, Mr. A. J. P. Taylor, however, we have in his newly published book, *The Origins of the Second World War,* an interpretation which frankly aims at challenging what he calls "the almost universal agreement among historians" that Hitler "planned the Second World War" and that "his will alone caused it." Mr. Taylor points out that there has always been controversy about the origins of the war of 1914; study of the documentary evidence which became so abundant after its close produced a picture of pre-war international politics substantially different from that of Allied wartime "innocentism," and there was wide scope for differences of opinion about the responsibilities of the statesmen principally concerned. For the war of 1939, on the other hand, the captured minutes of Hitler's secret conferences produced at the Nuremberg Trial, and particularly the so-called Hossbach Memorandum of November 1937, appeared to prove on the part of Hitler a definite plan for obtaining supremacy in Europe through a series of acts of military aggression. His responsibility for bringing on a European war in 1939 was therefore considered to be beyond question, and if blame was also cast on the leaders of the Western democracies, it was not for provoking Hitler, but for appeasing him and for failing to stop his career of treaty violation and conquest while it could still have been done without a mortal struggle.

Mr. Taylor, however, questions the conception of Hitler and his policy which is implied in this view. According to him, Hitler's foreign policy "was that of his predecessors" in the German government; he, too, "wanted to free Germany from the restrictions of the peace treaty; to restore a great German army; and then to make Germany the greatest power in Europe from her natural weight." Further, Mr. Taylor denies that Hitler had any preconceived plan or blueprint of conquest on the general argument that "statesmen are too absorbed by events to follow a preconceived plan—the systems attributed to Hitler are really those of Hugh Trevor-Roper, Elizabeth Wiskemann, and Alan Bullock." Finally, Mr. Taylor claims that Hitler always wanted to avoid war, although he was ready to threaten it in order to get his way, and that he did not really want territorial expansion, but only a zone of friendly satellite states in Eastern Europe. His orders to the German army after Munich to be ready to take over Bohemia and Moravia were "measures of precaution, not plans for aggression"; he "doubted whether the [Munich] settlement would work" and "believed, without sinister intention, that independent Czechoslovakia could not survive." There was not "anything sinister or premeditated in the protectorate over Bohemia." In 1939 the state of German armaments "gives the decisive proof that Hitler was not contemplating general war and probably not intending war at all. . . . The war of 1939, far from being premeditated, was a mistake, the result on both sides of diplomatic blunders."

* A review of *The Origins of the Second World War,* by A. J. P. Taylor (Atheneum, 296 pp., $4.50).

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This onslaught on accepted beliefs, coming as it did from a writer with a high reputation as a diplomatic historian, was received by the critics in Britain with a remarkable degree of respect and approval. In particular, the *Times Literary Supplement,* generally regarded as the most important London organ of book reviewing, gave it unqualified praise and spoke of its "impeccable logic." It has naturally been translated into German and is providing an armory of propaganda for those Germans who regard Hitler's Reich as the deeply wronged victim of the Second World War. It has not, however, gone entirely unchallenged; the (anonymous) review in the *Times Literary Supplement* drew several letters of protest from persons well qualified to speak on modern German history, and a full-scale attack on the book was delivered by H. R. Trevor-Roper, the Professor of Modern History in Mr. Taylor's own university. This led to an appearance of the two historians together on the television screen, a medium in which Mr. Taylor has long been established as a star; his performance on this occasion, though technically accomplished, does not appear to have carried conviction with the majority of viewers. Most Englishmen in fact still believe that they were right in opposing Hitler in 1939, and it will take more than Mr. Taylor's "impeccable logic" to persuade them to the contrary, at any rate as long as there is someone else in the picture to point out the inconsistencies and fallacies in his argument.

THE BOOK INDEED is not one to be dismissed simply with broad generalizations; it can only be refuted by an examination of the evidence to which Mr. Taylor himself appeals. He claims to be an impartial historian whose conclusions have been forced upon him by a study of the documents. "I am concerned to understand what happened," he writes, "not to vindicate or condemn." The critic who observes the manner in which Mr. Taylor selects the material which suits his argument may doubt whether he indeed approaches his theme without bias—especially if he compares Mr. Taylor's conclusions on Hitler with his postwar attitude toward the policies of another totalitarian regime—but it would be going too far afield to inquire into the preconceptions of his peculiar outlook; the primary question is simply whether the picture of Hitler which he presents is one that should be accepted as historically true.

In search of the historical Hitler we have to turn first of all to the pages of *Mein Kampf.* It is true that it was written in 1924–25, and that conditions in Europe had changed by 1933, and even more by 1939. But what Hitler has to say about his ultimate objectives, particularly in Chapter XIV of the second volume, can be compared with Hitler's subsequent actions as ruler of Germany as well as with his statements of policy in the secret directives given to his generals. The most significant passages of this chapter have often been quoted, but it seems worthwhile to quote them again since Mr. Taylor chooses to ignore them. After denouncing the foreign policy of Germany before 1914 because "instead of a sound policy of territorial expansion in Europe" it "embarked on a policy of colonial and trade expansion," Hitler expounds his doctrine of *Lebensraum.* There can only be a "healthy proportion" between a people and its territory if "the support of the people is guaranteed by the resources of its own soil and subsoil." It must, in other words, be virtually autarchic and immune to blockade, and it must have room for a maximum increase of population without losing any by emigration or becoming dependent on imported food. To be a Great Power, with the potentiality of being the strongest of all, Germany must acquire new territory on a grand scale. England, declares Hitler, should not be regarded as a nation which is powerful in spite of the smallness of its territory, "for the English motherland is in reality the great metropolis of the British Empire which owns almost a fourth of the earth's surface. Next to this we must consider the United States as one of the foremost among the colossal states, also Russia and China." In pursuit of a similar territorial magnitude "we National Socialists have purposely drawn a line through the course followed by pre-war Germany in foreign policy. We put an end to the perpetual Germanic march toward the South and West of Europe and turn our eyes toward the lands of the East. We finally put a stop to the colonial and trade policy of pre-war times and pass over to the territorial policy of the future. When

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we speak of new territory in Europe today, we must principally think of Russia and the border states subject to her."

Whatever may be thought of this objective on moral grounds, it is at any rate quite clearly formulated, and it was an aim which Hitler came near to attaining when his armies reached the Neva and the Volga. To say that it was nothing but a continuation of the foreign policy of previous German governments is quite untrue. There had for a long time been elements in Germany which had nursed such ideas, but they had certainly not been motives of official German policy before 1914; the vast gains of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty had been the outcome of Russia's wartime collapse in 1917, not of any pre-war scheme for the conquest of Russia. Under the Weimar Republic we cannot assign such projects of territorial expansion to a Rathenau, a Stresemann, or a Bruening. In fact, Hitler complains that his aims for the future of Germany were rejected, not only by liberals and pacifists, who were prepared to submit to the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles, but also by the nationalists, whose purposes were confined to recovering for the Reich the frontiers of 1914. What Hitler proposes is a territory on which 250 million Germans can be self-supporting in a hundred years time. He is quite clear that this territory can only be taken from other nations, and declares plainly that "our people will not obtain territory, and therewith the means of existence, as a favor from any other people but will have to win it by the power of a triumphant sword."

TWELVE YEARS AFTER writing this as the leader of a small political party which had failed ignominiously in an attempt at a *coup d'état* in Bavaria, Hitler held forth on the same theme to the heads of the German armed forces who listened to him as their Fuehrer, and declared: "The history of all times has proved that space expansion can only be effected by breaking resistance and taking risks. Even setbacks are unavoidable; neither formerly nor today has space been found without an owner. The question for Germany is where the greatest possible conquest could be made at the lowest cost."

Mr. Taylor dismisses the minutes of these secret conferences as convincing evidence of Hitler's intentions on the ground that Hitler would not wish to reveal his inmost thoughts to his generals, whom he distrusted. This point may be conceded, but its implication is just the opposite of what Mr. Taylor requires for his case. He suggests that Hitler simply ranted and talked big in front of his generals, going far beyond what he really intended to do. But Hitler's relations with the heads of armed forces and the circumstances of his speeches make it likely that he told them, not more, but less than he had it in his mind to do in the long run. He was not talking to beer-hall cronies who would be impressed by empty fantasies of empire-building, but to professional military men who, on the one hand, would have the duty of carrying out whatever he required of them for the execution of his policies, but on the other hand were openly alarmed lest Germany's strength should be overstrained by projects too vast for her undertaking. Tactically it was in Hitler's interest to instruct them at each stage in what he wanted of them without alarming them too much by premature revelation of the total design. Above all, it was not expedient in November 1937 to set before the generals the conquest of Russia as an ultimate objective of policy, for the principle of good relations with Russia in Germany's weakened condition after 1918 had become an article of faith with the Reichswehr and had the authority of Bismarckian tradition behind it. So there is nothing about attacking Russia in the Hossbach Memorandum; the immediate program of aggression is limited to Austria and Czechoslovakia. Only after the conclusion of the Nazi-Soviet Pact do we find Hitler declaring to his commanders at Obersalzberg on August 22, 1939: "My pact with Poland [of 1934] was only meant to gain time. And with Russia will happen just what I have done in Poland. After Stalin's death—we shall crush the Soviet Union." But this was not really anything new; it was already there in *Mein Kampf*. The curious qualification "after Stalin's death" was perhaps due to a feeling that some regard should be paid at least in words to the man with whom he had just concluded a treaty of mutual non-aggression.

With regard to Austria and Czechoslovakia, the Hossbach Memorandum shows Hitler as saying after a discussion of the conditions for successful attacks on both

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countries: "The annexation of the two states to Germany, militarily and politically, would constitute a considerable relief, owing to shorter and better frontiers, the freeing of fighting personnel for other purposes, and the possibility of constituting new armies up to a strength of twelve divisions." In this policy statement, made three months before the *Anschluss* and ten before Munich, it should be noticed that both countries are to be fully annexed and there is no question of taking merely the Sudetenland without the rest of Bohemia and Moravia. Mr. Taylor, nevertheless, treats the incorporation of Austria in the Reich as an afterthought to an invasion which Hitler had not previously intended. It is no doubt true, as Mr. Taylor claims, that the timing of the move against Austria was determined by Schuschnigg's coup of a snap plebiscite on Austrian independence, which would have been a serious political setback for Hitler if he had permitted it to take place, but this does not mean that the absorption of Austria at an appropriate time had not already been planned by Hitler, as the Hossbach Memorandum shows that it was.

THE HOSSBACH MEMORANDUM also provides the key to an understanding of the Munich crisis. The paradox of that episode is that Germany and all the world saw in it a great triumph for Hitler because he got the Sudetenland, whereas Hitler was in a fury because he had been deprived of his entry into Prague. In order to neutralize Britain, where Chamberlain was known to be in favor of a cession of the Sudetenland to Germany on ethnic grounds, Hitler picked his quarrel with Czechoslovakia on the Sudeten question, but this was to be the pretext for a war against Czechoslovakia in which Hitler believed that Britain and France would stand aside and the whole of Bohemia would be overrun. But Chamberlain persuaded the French to join with him in putting pressure on the Czechs to cede the Sudetenland, and their submission deprived Hitler of his pretext; when he put up his terms at Godesberg, he found the British attitude becoming tougher, and finally there was the mobilization of the British fleet. Hitler called off the war and accepted the Munich agreement which gave him the Sudetenland, but not the predominantly Czech areas of Bohemia. Immediately afterward he ordered the German army to get ready for the occupation of the Czech lands and he carried out the takeover in March of 1939. Thus the conquests projected in the Hossbach Memorandum were completed. But Mr. Taylor will not allow that Hitler had ever intended to go to Prague or that he had good strategic and economic reasons for doing so. "He did it without design," writes Mr. Taylor, ignoring the plain words of the Hossbach Memorandum; "it brought him slight advantage. He acted only when events had already destroyed the settlement of Munich." Mr. Taylor holds that the disturbances in Slovakia early in March took Hitler by surprise, but there is substantial evidence that these troubles, although arising out of a genuine Slovak nationalism, were fomented from Berlin.

When five months later the crisis between Germany and Poland came to a head, Mr. Taylor accepts the German thesis that it was about Danzig. Indeed he heads the last chapter of his book "War for Danzig," and the title is not meant to be ironical. Danzig was chosen as the issue because the German ethnic character of its population made it possible to invoke the principle of nationality. But to his generals on May 23 Hitler declared: "The Pole is no 'supplementary enemy.' Poland will always be on the side of our adversaries. . . . Danzig is not the subject of the dispute at all. It is a question of expanding our living space in the East. . . . Poland sees danger in a German victory in the West and will attempt to rob us of that victory. There is therefore no question of sparing Poland and we are left with the decision: to attack Poland at the first suitable opportunity. . . . We cannot expect a repetition of the Czech affair. There will be war."

That should be clear enough, especially as these were not words spoken in casual conversation, but an address to the heads of the armed forces charged with the military preparations for the attack, which as a matter of history actually took place on the date assigned for it. The intention is not, however, clear enough for Mr. Taylor, who, as we have seen, considers that "the war of 1939, far from being premeditated, was a mistake, the result on both sides of diplomatic blunders." But it is hard to see where the blun-

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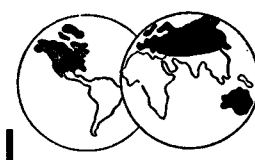
ders came in, given the fact of the British and French guarantees to Poland. Both Britain and France were pledged to come to the aid of Poland if she were attacked; Germany deliberately attacked Poland, and Britain and France went to war—though with minimum effort—in accordance with their pledges. Everybody acted with their eyes open and there was no misunderstanding. It is regarded by some people as a blunder that Britain should have given a guarantee to Poland at all without prior agreement with Russia and thereafter should have pursued negotiations for an alliance with Russia in such a dilatory fashion. But the guarantee was originally given without any idea of making it conditional on Russian backing, and failure to get a Russian alliance was not in the eyes of the British government any reason for going back on the guarantee. Hitler hoped, as the record of his speech of May 23 shows, that his *coup de théâtre* of a pact with Stalin—which he knew he could make whenever he wanted it on the basis of a partition of Poland and the Baltic States with Russia—might deter Britain and France from intervening, but the same speech shows that he did not count on it and was determined to go through with his attack even if they did intervene. In other words, he conditionally willed a European war of which he had formal and solemn warning, and he can no more be said to have tried to avoid war than a bandit who shoots a bank cashier can be held innocent of murder because he hoped that his victim might hand over the cash without resisting.

Mr. Taylor evidently thinks the Poles ought to have capitulated; "sober statesmen," he says, "would have surrendered at discretion when they contemplated the dangers threatening Poland and the inadequacy of her means." In support of his disapproval he is able to quote Nevile Henderson as saying, "I have held from the beginning that the Poles were utterly foolish and unwise" and the American Ambassador's report to Washington that Chamberlain was "more worried about getting the Poles to be reasonable than the Germans." But Britain was pledged to assist Poland "if any action were taken which clearly threatened their independence and which the Polish government accordingly felt obliged to resist with their national forces"; there was no condition that the Poles must be "reasonable" by making unilateral concessions to German demands. The criticism must, therefore, refer back to the original British guarantee, and it is indeed for this that Mr. Taylor reserves his most biting denunciation. He makes great play with the record that when the Polish foreign minister was informed of the proposed British guarantee, he accepted it "between two flicks of ash off his cigarette." "Two flicks," writes Mr. Taylor, "and British grenadiers would die for Danzig. Two flicks; and the illusory great Poland, created in 1919, signed her death-warrant." But let us suppose that there had been no offer of guarantee, that Britain in March 1939 had decided to let events in Eastern Europe take their course. In all probability Poland would then have capitulated to Germany and accepted the proposals for an offensive alliance against Russia which we know from the published Polish documents had been repeatedly offered to her. It can be argued that Poland would thus have been better off; at any rate, her ultimate fate as an ally of Germany could hardly have been worse than it was to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be as an ally of Britain. But what of Britain and France? We may let Hitler speak for himself, even though it was only to his generals; in his speech of August 22, he said: "I thought I would turn first against the West and only afterward against the East. But the sequence cannot be fixed. . . . I wanted to establish an acceptable relationship with Poland in order to fight first against the West, but this plan, which was agreeable to me, could not be executed. It became clear to me that Poland would attack us in case of conflict with the West."

Hitler's claim is that, having made his non-aggression pact with Poland in 1934, he had hoped for a pro-German trend of Polish policy which would have enabled him to count on Polish neutrality in a German war with Britain and France, but since Poland had accepted a British guarantee and revived her alliance with France, the destruction of Poland must have priority. "Even if war should break out in the West, the destruction of Poland must be the primary objective; quick decision because of the season." But why had Hitler been thinking about war in the West even if Poland had become a German satellite and there had been no British guarantee of her independence? The answer is given in the Hossbach Memorandum: "German policy must reckon with its two hateful enemies, England and France, to whom a strong German colossus in the center of Europe would be intolerable." Hitler indeed reckoned, and as the event showed, rightly, that however long it might take for Britain and France to make up their minds to oppose the expansion of Germany, they would ultimately do so. He knew their desire for peace and was ready to exploit it to the full in the early stages of his policy, but unless they were definitely willing to renounce all concern with the affairs of Eastern Europe and even to join him in a war against Russia, he could not count on their benevolent neutrality for the final and decisive phase of his design. They might strike at him or impose an armed mediation at the moment when his armies were committed deep in the interior of Russia; when the prospect of a Germany extending from the Rhine to the Volga was revealed before their eyes, they would deem it too dangerous to be tolerated. Logically, therefore, they must be attacked and crushed before the conquest of Russia could be undertaken. In his speech to his generals of May 23, Hitler speculated on the chances of a surprise attack on the British fleet, but added that it would only be possible if Germany were not involved in war with Britain on account of Poland, i.e. if Germany were able to choose the moment to strike in time of peace without declaration of war. The valid inference is that if Britain had failed to go to war on behalf of Poland, she would have been subjected to a "Pearl Harbor" attack shortly afterward, and it is highly unlikely that she would have survived it.

But Mr. Taylor will have none of this. Hitler only wanted "a free hand to destroy conditions in the East which enlightened Western opinion had also pronounced intolerable" and he "had no ambitions directed against Great Britain and France." What a pity indeed that we did not let this admirable German statesman have his way! We should not then have this tiresome postwar situation which now confronts us. But many of us would no longer be here to be confronted with anything; in company probably with Mr. Taylor himself we should long ago have perished in Buchenwald or Dachau.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

HERBERT J. GANS is a sociologist and city planner at the University of Pennsylvania. Readers of COMMENTARY will recall his much-discussed series of articles on the Jewish community of Park Forest.

ERNEST STOCK is an official of the Jewish Agency for Israel in Jerusalem. His last previous contribution was a review of several studies of German Jewry (March 1961).

G. F. HUDSON, the distinguished Oxford historian and political analyst, at one time served in the British Foreign Office.

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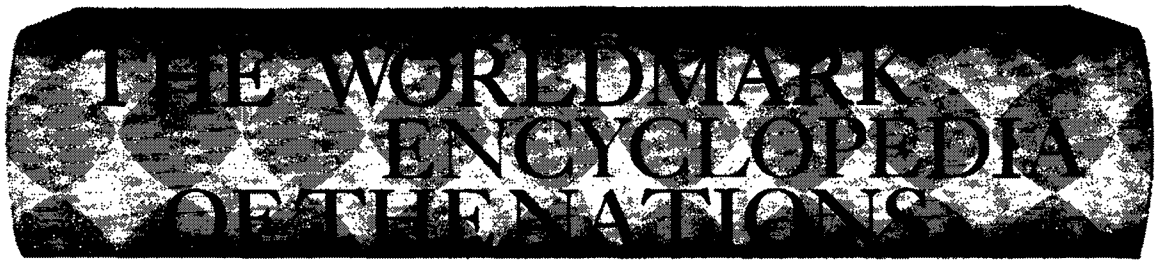

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